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The Nation.

October 25, 1986 $1.25; U.K. 85p

EDITORIAL

THERE THEY GO AGAIN

Attended by familiar, tortuous debate about the letter and spirit of the law, the Central Intelligence Agency has returned to center stage. The settings range from the agency's Moscow station, whose zeal to get to Nicholas Daniloff's sources may have indirectly rushed the United States toward the premature summit in Iceland, to El Salvador's air base at Ilopango, through which the agency supplies *contra* operations.

The growth of the intelligence agencies, and their sealing off from public scrutiny, is a prized achievement of the Reagan presidency. The acknowledged intelligence budget for this year stands at $24 billion. But the issue is not size alone. Director William Casey's world view, which mingles ideological fixation with a love of the hunt, has set agency priorities.

Casey's foot soldiers are men of deliberately ambiguous status such as Eugene Hasenfus or perhaps Jon Pattis, the engineer arrested on espionage charges in Iran on June 16. From them the trail leads to figures like the mysterious Max Gómez (whose history of C.I.A. work goes back to the Bay of Pigs) and thence, if the job is well done, vanishes into a semantic morass about the difference between assets and operatives, freelancers and mercs. Those who screw up publicly are labeled overzealous.

William Hyland, editor of *Foreign Affairs* and himself a C.I.A. veteran, provides a more honest reading. The Reagan doctrine, he says, means that "actions are going to be controversial and risky, but that's the price you pay." Casey, though, tries to avoid risk by ducking Congressional and media scrutiny. As his agency scurries to dissociate itself from the current sightings, we should be aware that out-of-control zealotry is not simply the fault of scapegoats—the low-level contract employees and part-timers. It is the very essence of a fast-growing company.

UNFINISHED REVOLUTIONS
Daniel Singer

REYKJAVIK
Alexander Cockburn

ALTERED GENES
Charles Piller

FARMERS AND THE LEFT
Jay Walljasper

INDIAN VOTING
Wilbur Wood

LENORE MARSHALL POETRY PRIZE

NEW VERDICT ON AN OLD WAR

RECKONING WITH THE KOREAN WAR

BRUCE CUMINGS

Eugene Hasenfus, shot down delivering weapons to the *contras* in Nicaragua, is an unlikely carrier of historical truth. His capture embarrassed the Reagan Administration, but how can we grasp his symbolism in the broadest sense? He was on a rollback mission, just as he had been when he worked for Air America during the Vietnam War. He is an asterisk in a forty-year history of sometimes open, sometimes clandestine attempts to depose Communist regimes.

The matrix of thought and decision on all such interventions was formed in the 1950s by the Korean War and the options it raised: accommodation, containment or rollback. Then as now, shadowy and allegedly private actors interfered with the foreign policy process in an explosive mix. Are there lessons to be learned from this past?

Heidegger asserts that there is an intimate connection among historical memory, the naming of things and that process we call thinking. Bad memories give you bad thinking. By naming, we locate or "call" something for the memory to rescue it from oblivion and keep it for thought.

It doesn't seem to be history that we remember, but particular verdicts. Ask yourself the following question: What kind of war was the Korean War? The Truman liberal will respond, It was a limited war, a success that brought containment to East Asia, invoked collective security arrangements and taught the Communists a lesson—this far, and no farther. The MacArthur conservative will assert, It was the first defeat in our history, and it showed that there is no substitute for victory.

(*Continued on Page 406*)

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LETTERS.

FAIR PLAY

The following response should have appeared after Robert Frauenglas's October 11 letter objecting to our choice of Edward W. Said to review Terrorism: How the West Can Win, *edited by Benjamin Netanyahu.*

Pity the poor Palestinian: dispossessed of his land, his vote and now, by the edict of Robert Frauenglas, executive director of the Committee for the Absorption of Soviet Émigrés, his first amendment rights as a critic. And poor Edward Said, a respected academic and an articulate opponent of all terrorism—whether American, Israeli or Palestinian—who is to be disqualified from public dialogue because the vehicle for an attack on his people happened to be a book. Once again the doctrine of fair play is amended to fair play except for Palestinians (now equated with terrorists, whom the eagle-eyed Frauenglas can spot even when they come dressed in academic disguise). Excluding the pariah from public forums is not a principle found in Mill, nor in good journalism, but it does enjoy a certain currency in menacing letters to the editor. *Elizabeth Pochoda*
Literary Editor

POETIC LICENSE REQUIRED

Lake Hill, N.Y.
Thank you for Douglas Crase's review of *Terms to Be Met*, by George Bradley ["The Corner of the Eye," Sept. 6]. It made me want to pass a law requiring everyone to read it before ever sitting down to read another poem. *Ira Wolfert*

AUDEN ON THE MOON

Oracle, Ariz.
What can Douglas Crase mean by calling W.H. Auden's moon poem "disagreeable"? Auden was not denying that the moon landings took place; he was merely expressing for many our relief that no trace of that expensive exhibitionist technostunt is visible from Earth. Like Auden, most people still admire the grace and loveliness of the moon, night after night, without ever giving a thought to that fading incident of fifteen? twenty? years ago. As a friend of mine says, "What *was* Armstrong doing up there anyway? You can't play the trumpet in a vacuum."

Exactly: the idolatry of science is the grossest superstition of this gross decade, right up there with creationism, astrology, the Dancing Wu Li Masters and the "Tao of physics." The more we learn about outer space and inner space, about quasars and quarks, about big bangs and little blips, the more remote, abstract and intellectually inconsequential it all becomes. In this respect George Bradley's flat prosaic poems serve as an apt reflection of their subject. Or in the view of Sherlock Holmes: "Whether the Earth goes around the Sun or the Sun around the Earth matters not a tinker's damn to me."

The Earth is where we live. Our growing awareness of humanity's progressive destruction of this gracious planet (thanks largely to scientific technology) is the great tragic discovery of our time. Now there's a mighty theme for a mighty book—but a challenge to which no modern poet or novelist has yet adequately responded. Where is our Melville, our Milton, our Mann when we need him most? *Edward Abbey*

CRASE REPLIES

New York City
W.H. Auden's poem "Moon Landing" proposes that "It's natural the Boys should whoop it up for/so huge a phallic triumph, an adventure/it would not have occurred to women—to think worth while" and proceeds:

> Worth *going* to see? I can well believe it.
> Worth *seeing*? Mneh! I once rode through a desert
> and was not charmed: give me a watered
> lively garden, remote from blatherers
>
> about the New, the von Brauns and their ilk, where
> on August mornings I can count the morning
> glories, where to die has a meaning,
> and no engine can shift my perspective.
>
> Unsmudged, thank God, my Moon still queens the Heavens
> as She ebbs and fulls, a Presence to glop at . . .

In 1969 there were reasons to regard the moon landing as imperial circus. But I can't think of saving reasons for lines so sexist, so ignorant of the charms of deserts (the Sonoran, say, in Edward Abbey's Arizona), so intolerant of innovation, so smug about the poet's perspective, so clichéd, when those lines are also so disagreeable to the ear. Otherwise, Abbey's and my reading of Bradley's poems are not so far apart as he thinks. It's just that I like the Lucretian hope that if people understood what the Earth is really made of they would be less likely to take that astonishing reality for granted, more inclined to cherish it than to "rapture" it back to a prequasar blur of subatomic particles.
Douglas Crase

NEW QUESTIONS

Brooklyn, N.Y.
While doing research for a review of Armando Valladares's *Against All Hope*, which was published in the September 24 *Guardian*, I came across evidence that appears to remove any doubt that Valladares worked in some capacity for the Batista police. Valladares himself is quoted in *The Miami Herald* for December 26, 1982, as saying, "Prior to the revolution, I worked as a test evaluator in mathematics and reading skills for people applying for jobs in the police force." He states his work was reviewed shortly after the revolution and that he chose to accept an assignment in another department. The review he mentions seems to be the very February 17, 1959, report cited by Alexander Cockburn ["Letters," Sept. 20].

If the work Valladares admitted to in 1982 but omitted from his book is the full extent of his police connection, the job was innocuous enough, but it runs counter to the image he paints of himself as an opponent of the Batista regime. It certainly raises questions about why, in a 380-page book, less than half a page is devoted to his activities before his arrest. I would also like to note that none of the material I've seen shows Valladares to have been a torturer or a member of what he and Ronald Radosh call the secret police. The material does state that he was recommended for police employment by Armando Carratala, an infamous torturer in the Batista police. *Dan Georgakas*

THE BIG PAYBACK

Somerville, Mass.
In his review of Nelson George's *Where Did Our Love Go?* George De Stefano asks whether there will ever be a television special honoring the psychedelic music of the 1960s ["Inside Out, Aug. 16/23]. His assumption seems to be that because Motown received such an "honor" and psychedelic music isn't likely to, the greater value of Motown soul music is established. In fact, this show fits quite well with the wave of nostalgia the networks have been presenting lately (updated versions of *Andy Griffith*, *Leave It to Beaver*, etc.), a nostalgia that is clearly related to the Reaganite appeal to supposedly simpler, better times. Motown is particularly well suited to this because, from its inception, its appeal has always relied on a conservative, unchallenging approach to music and performance. Psychedelic music, at at least in its early form, emphasized precisely the opposite: it was an explicit challenge to established ideas of pop music, an attempt to make rock-and-roll something more than catchy tunes and show-biz choreography. Not surprisingly, the music of the 1960s that has had the most significant influence on the more forward-looking musicians of today was the least conservative at the time: James Brown–style funk, psychedelia in its pre-"art" version and the original punk movement. Motown, on the other hand, lives on as TV nostalgia. Vindication indeed.
Richard Shapiro

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CONTENTS.

Volume 243, Number 13

LETTERS
394

EDITORIALS
393 There They Go Again
395 Summit Fallout
396 Papa Don't Preach
397 October Memories *Daniel Singer*

COLUMNS
398 Beat the Devil *Alexander Cockburn*

ARTICLES
393 New Verdict on an Old War: Reckoning With the Korean War *Bruce Cumings*
400 From Ice-nine to Ice-minus: Regulating Altered Genes *Charles Piller*
402 Farmers and the Left: Little Cell on the Prairie *Jay Walljasper*
404 Indian Voting Rights Suit: Second Battle of Big Horn *Wilbur Wood*

BOOKS & THE ARTS
412 The Lenore Marshall Prize *J.D. McClatchy*
413 Five Poems *Howard Moss*
415 Music *Edward W. Said*
418 Films *Terrence Rafferty*

Drawings by Bob Boyle

Editor, Victor Navasky

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EDITORIALS.

Summit Fallout

At the end of eleven hours of negotiations in Reykjavik, Mikhail Gorbachev turned to Ronald Reagan and said, "We missed a historic chance. Never have our positions been so close." Was Gorbachev right? Since the Administration is presenting a united front on behalf of Reagan's version, it falls to the Democrats to set the record straight and identify any unmissed opportunities that may still remain.

One hopes that the "leading Democratic strategist" quoted in *The New York Times* a couple of days after the failed summit was not speaking for his party when he said that it "must be very careful" in the next week, lest the "liberal Democrats seem to be doing Gorbachev's work for him." Now, if ever, is the time to transcend cold war platitudes and take the truth from wherever it can be found, rather than worrying who is doing whose work.

For almost two years the Russians, under Gorbachev, have made significant concessions on arms control. In almost every case, most notably his three extensions of a moratorium on nuclear testing, the United States has reciprocated with disdain. But Reagan's attempt to disinform the American public about the negotiation record at Iceland cannot undo the fact, as many American participants observed, that the Russians offered sweeping compromises. Even Secretary of State George Shultz characterized the Russians' tentative agreement at Reykjavik to eliminate their SS-20 missiles from Europe and cut their Asian forces by 80 percent as "breathtaking." The Soviet negotiators had other surprising proposals for their American counter-

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parts: 50 percent reductions in their strategic forces, a freeze on the number of short-range nuclear missiles in Eastern Europe and negotiations on lowering the numbers of those weapons once the agreement on long-range intermediate nuclear forces was signed. And Gorbachev dropped his demand for a total test ban, accepting Reagan's proposal that both sides take interim steps to reduce the number and yield of nuclear tests. Yet Reagan's refusal to abandon Star Wars undermined a breakthrough in arms control.

The Strategic Defense Initiative, it should not be forgotten, is a program that a large number of American scientists don't believe will work, whose purpose is an imperial one (safeguard America, the rest of the world be damned), whose costs are projected in the triple trillions of dollars, and which the Administration has tried to sell as a defensive shield although, as any first-year West Point cadet can tell you, in wartime defense is offense. A laser that can hit a missile can hit a city.

We do not know why Reagan expected the Russians to give something for nothing, or whether anyone in the Administration advocated negotiations on Star Wars—as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger appeared to do when after the talks he told Charlayne Hunter-Gault on the *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour* that he never understood why the United States wouldn't agree "as offense goes down . . . to lower the level of defense." We don't know what happened behind the scenes, or what prompted chief of staff Donald Regan to insist that after Reykjavik a summit was impossible, while Shultz and other Administration officials said no such thing. But it is up to the Democrats to find out, to clarify and to force the Reaganites to run on Reagan's record. After all, only last year the President said that "too much SALT is bad for you." And two years ago, it was revealed that Reagan had initiated a disinformation program to release, through the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Department, deliberately false data about S.D.I. in order to impede the transfer of technological information to the Russians. And it must be made clear that in calling for an extension, Reagan is essentially calling for a phase-out of the 1972 ABM treaty.

Perhaps this is the only positive outcome of the aborted talks in Iceland: Americans may now realize that the Reagan Administration wants to continue the arms race. Despite the President's public show of optimism, he and his advisers know that if the Democrats find the nerve to make their case, they may be able to defeat the Republicans in the fall and gain a majority in the Senate.

After a long season of acquiescence, here is a test for the Democrats. Are they ready to challenge Reagan's arms control record? "In order to retain a very theoretical weapon," Senator Gary Hart said after the summit, Reagan "gave up what would have been an extraordinary achievement in arms control." This Administration, he pointed out, "apparently never intended to use S.D.I. as a so-called bargaining chip, as they have often alleged." Even an ardent centrist like Senator Sam Nunn expressed hope that Reagan would rethink his position. Such stirrings offer some hope that the Democrats will return to the role of opposition party.

Papa Don't Preach

Last week the New York City Board of Education voted to cut back a pilot program through which health clinics in nine high schools had prescribed, and one had distributed, contraceptives to students. Several board members joined the Roman Catholic Archdiocese in arguing that giving advice on birth control to teen-agers encourages promiscuity. Board president Robert F. Wagner Jr. agreed to limit the provision of contraceptives on school grounds to students 18 and over. This compromise will supposedly protect younger students' morality; it actually means they will be less likely to practice birth control.

At the same time, a clinic based in a Chicago high school has been sued by a group of thirteen black clergymen and a handful of students and parents. They make the demagogic charge that the distribution of contraceptives at the all-black DuSable High School is "a calculated, pernicious effort to destroy the very fabric of family life among black parents and their children." Another party to the suit is the Pro-Life/Pro-Family Coalition, a group that apparently opposes birth control as well as abortion. Their victory would endanger all school-based clinics.

According to the Center for Population Options, the number of school-based clinics offering family planning and other health care has increased from twelve in 1980 to sixty-one today, with another hundred expected to open soon. At least ten dispense contraceptives directly, and about forty more are staffed by physicians who can write prescriptions for birth control pills or devices. Schools with these clinics have reported a marked decline in the rate of student pregnancy.

The problem of teen-age pregnancy in America is acute. In New York City alone, 14,300 women 17 and younger became pregnant in 1985, including 1,240 pregnancies to girls under 15. In 1985, more than 1 million women between the ages of 15 and 19 got pregnant, and over half of them carried their babies to term. Teen-age mothers are far more likely than their childless peers to drop out of school and to end up living in poverty. Of women under 30 who receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children, about 60 percent were teen-agers when they had their first child. Meanwhile, Madonna's hymn to adolescent motherhood tops the charts.

For a brief period last year, children having children made the front pages, but the hype had little impact on Federal priorities. No wonder, since the best way to combat teen-age pregnancy runs counter to the conservative agenda. According to an international study of family planning policies by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, the lowest rates of teen-age pregnancy were in countries that made contraceptives accessible to young people at low cost or for free, without parental notification, and offered sex education.

A detailed survey conducted last year by the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families reported that in most states "existing prevention and assistance services are inadequate." Achieving adequacy requires more money than states alone can easily raise. It also requires officials

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willing to stand up to the right-wingers who would sacrifice the prospects of millions of young women to their fantasies about what America should be.

October Memories

With Zbigniew Bujak, Bogdan Lis, Adam Michnik and their comrades out of jail, there is reason to rejoice. With the Polish government stubbornly refusing to tolerate even a shadow of Solidarity, there is reason to worry. Compared with the exhilarating mood of six years ago, when Poland seemed to chart a road to worker democracy, the prospect is now gloomy. But the events should be seen in a historical perspective and this month of October is one for commemoration. Thirty years ago the joyful Polish "Spring in October" led straight to its bloody counterpoint, the Hungarian insurrection.

Nineteen fifty-six was a momentous year. Nikita Khrushchev's secret indictment of Stalin, delivered in February at the 20th Party Congress in Moscow, shook the Communist world. Its first reverberations proved strongest in Eastern Europe. The Poles had the good fortune of possessing in Wladyslaw Gomulka a fallen leader whose rehabilitation was not posthumous: the party reformers decided to put him back in office. As the plenary session of the Central Committee opened on October 19, a mighty Soviet delegation, headed by Khrushchev himself, landed in Warsaw to proclaim its veto. After forty-eight hours of explosive tension throughout the country, the Russians yielded.

The election of Gomulka sketched how far Moscow would tolerate reform within its bloc. The Hungarian events wrote those limits in blood. The two were linked. On October 23, Hungarian students took to the streets to celebrate the Polish success, and the celebration turned into an uprising. Prompted by spreading insurrection, the newly formed government of Imre Nagy was changing course. Here again the Russians hesitated. Then, aided and abetted by the Anglo-French Suez expedition, they struck. On November 4 Soviet troops entered Budapest.

Strangely, this tragedy did not at once kill the revisionist illusion prevailing at the time that the transition from Stalinism would somehow be gradually carried out from above by the leaders, with the help of steady economic progress. It took another tragic invasion, of Czechoslovakia in 1968, as well as the lengthy reign of Leonid Brezhnev, with its absence of both reform and economic progress, to destroy this myth and simultaneously to shatter the once-monolithic international Communist movement. But while hopes for Fabian reform from above dwindled, Poland revealed the scope of pressure from below, foreshadowing the resurrection of an independent labor movement in Eastern Europe and proving that dissident intellectuals may play a role if they manage to join forces with such a movement.

But have not the great expectations been disappointed in Poland as well? Undoubtedly. Yet to say that a movement was defeated is not necessarily to suggest that it was useless or insignificant. From the day Soviet tanks entered Prague it was clear that no reform in Eastern Europe would be safe until the Russian people carry out their own transformation. The crucial position of Russia meanwhile imposes limitations on the movement in Eastern Europe. The revolution, if one may say so, must be a creeping one and self-restrained. But this does not mean that all action is in vain. If the idea of a Fabian solution bestowed on the people was an illusion, the now fashionable propaganda concept of Eastern Europe as permanent hell is a total absurdity.

Today a visitor to Budapest or Warsaw is struck in both cases by the road those very different towns have traveled. Hungary, with its obvious concessions to a market economy, and Poland, with its freedom of speech, mass *samizdat* and the defiance of dissidents, provide a striking contrast to the Stalinist period. It takes the hypocritical blindness of a Jeane Kirkpatrick to describe the Soviet empire as frozen forever, unchanged and unchanging. History did not come to a stop in Eastern Europe.

The questions on the agenda given this historic perspective concern a changing society. As the Soviet Union is driven to economic reform, postponed in the Brezhnev era, what impact will it have on the political situation? In particular, can the conflict between apparatchiks and managers within the party give scope to the revival of a labor movement there? Will political changes in Moscow once again precipitate events at the periphery? Can the dissidents outline projects and offer prospects so as to influence those events? Will the rulers have the courage and imagination to change enough to avoid explosions? (It is in this context that the recent events in Poland inspire both hope and worry.) Our problem in the West is how best to contribute, with our very modest means, so that when the movement of reform in Eastern Europe quickens pace—partly through pressure from below, partly through concessions from above—it will head in a progressive direction.

DANIEL SINGER

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s correspondent in Europe.*

EXCELSIOR

Folio has presented its silver award to *The Nation* "to honor excellence and reward achievement in circulation direct marketing." The award was accepted by Stephen W. Soule, circulation director of *The Nation*; Paul Stiga, who wrote the prize-winning direct-mail piece; and Deborah Thomas, who designed it.

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation has awarded its Bryant Spann Memorial Prize for 1986 to Richard A. Cloward and Frances Fox Piven for their two-part article on registration strategy, "Trying to Break Down the Barriers" and "How to Get Out the Vote in 1988," published in *The Nation* on November 2 and November 23, 1985, respectively. The prize recognizes "published work which evidences social vision and commitment to social justice."

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Reykjavik and the War Economy

So much for Reagan's place in history. It's been an axiom of those holding a kindly or evolutionary view of the President's political consciousness that in the end a sense of responsibility to children as yet unborn and history books as yet unwritten would incline him to strike a deal with the Soviet Union on arms control. Along the road to Reykjavik almost all the pundits, editorialists and "news analysts" had taken the same line: the President was accessible to reason. They were wrong, and those who held the steady-state view of Reagan's political consciousness—that it was, is and always will be a shriveled affair—were right. The President did the wrong thing as he always will. There is no "moderate wing" in the State Department or the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. They are all Richard Perles. This Administration came to office with the intent of destroying arms control and it has succeeded. Those who persist in believing otherwise are either fools or placemen, like Robert Karl Manoff of New York University's Center for War, Peace and the News Media. In *The New York Times* for October 15 he absurdly maintained that "President Reagan is a man of greater vision than many of us expected, bolder and more foresighted than most of those who oppose his nuclear policy."

The final instrument of destruction at Reykjavik was, of course, the Strategic Defense Initiative. To preserve this program the Reagan Administration was prepared to forfeit the only substantial cuts in the history of nuclear weaponry. As Gorbachev remarked, "only a madman" would sign an arms agreement that permits one party to press forward with an entirely new generation of space-based weaponry.

If only madmen would accept this offer, the corollary is that only madmen would make it. So, is the Reagan Administration made up of madmen? Not if viewed from the moral coordinates of postwar U.S. policy. It is not nor has it ever been postwar U.S. policy to permit the Soviet economy—always operating under severe production constraints—release from the arms race to increase capacity for peaceful purposes. It is not nor at the most fundamental level has it ever been postwar U.S. policy to relinquish the ambition of superiority in the arms race. And it is not nor has it ever been U.S. policy to shift the domestic economy from the underpinning of Keynesian military expenditures that have sustained it since the run-up to the Korean war.

Hence the Administration's determination to cling to Star Wars. Even at the conceptual level the system is not benign. The supposed site defense weapons and the X-ray lasers are intrinsically offensive and, despite the President's continuing lunatic claims, nuclear. They aim at superiority. Aside perhaps from the President himself, snoozing in the bunker of his own mind, no one believes in shield defense. But everyone, from the scientists at Los Alamos and Livermore to the military contractors, knows the dollars in the program—some $3.5 billion this year—represent a government commitment to arms race research and development past the end of the century and a widening river of dollars to the academies, the research laboratories, hi-tech companies and arms firms that are, barely, keeping the economy afloat.

As we enter the post-Reykjavik phase with its accompanying propaganda offensives, how will the media consensus congeal? The Reagan Administration is going to extraordinary lengths to get its version of the talks down the public throat. Vice Adm. John Poindexter, national security adviser, who loathes the mere smell of journalists, forced himself to attend a weekly breakfast meeting for columnists organized by *The Christian Science Monitor*. Secretary of State George Shultz turned up on CNN's *Crossfire*. If this sort of thing keeps up, we'll be seeing Caspar Weinberger at *The Nation*'s next editorial meeting. As soon as Air Force One took off from Iceland, Reagan's handlers realized they had to launch a sophisticated, Soviet-style propaganda offensive to explain why they had turned down Gorbachev's proposals to achieve nuclear disarmament. The Administration's strategy is clear: put forward the astonishing claim, first suggested by Shultz in his post-collapse statement in Reykjavik, that Gorbachev wanted to tear up the 1972 ABM treaty. The mainstream U.S. media seized on this theme enthusiastically. The fact of the matter is that Article 5 of the treaty enjoins that no signatory shall "develop, test, or deploy" a "space-based" ABM system or components thereof. In its zeal for the Star Wars program, the Reagan Administration has come up with legal distortions of those simple words that would be comical if they weren't so malign.

The next state in the propaganda offensive, no doubt to be leaked to Evans & Novak, will be the discovery of a new generation of Soviet intermediate missiles which, if the Reykjavik agreement had gone through, would have held Western Europe at their mercy. In short, Reagan won't be greatly inconvenienced by the press. Spread out around me as I write, on October 14, are the local headlines: "Reagan urges Soviets to join summit in U.S.," *The Arizona Republic*; "Reagan still hopes for arms control," *Las Vegas Sun*; "Reagan: Not My Fault," *The Los Angeles Herald Examiner*; "Reagan Cites Wide Summit Progress, Bars 'Bad' Accord," *Los Angeles Times*. Looks like a Soviet-style propaganda offensive to me.

The Future of 'The New York Times'

Even as the President was invoking the peaceful uses of Star Wars to General Secretary Gorbachev, *The New York Times* announced changes in its editorial high command. This was done with the weighty gloom that accompanies leadership shifts in the Soviet Union. At first glimpse of the headline announcing A.M. Rosenthal's impending departure as executive editor I switched on the radio to hear if solemn music was being played.

Some may say that it is cause for rejoicing that the new executive editor, Max Frankel, is not a Rosenthal apparatchik, apt to the paranoiac procedures of that man's sojourn in the editorial chair. It may be true that Frankel has always been Rosenthal's rival rather than his henchperson, but his term as editorial-page editor, flanked by Jack Rosenthal

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(allegedly no relation), is no source for comfort.

During his tenure the newspaper printed shameful editorials supporting Reagan's policy in Central America and his bombing raid on Libya. Its rabid calls for immigration "reform"—apparently an obsession of Jack Rosenthal's—culminated in an extraordinary attack on the sanctuary movement in the Southwest. It was under Frankel's supervision also that *The Times* began an editorial assault on the utility of a test-ban moratorium or a comprehensive test ban, with concomitant approval for Reagan's "policy" on arms control. An editorial for September 28 included the remark that the United States already has "the key to the technology that assures America's nuclear shield"—which William Shirer correctly assessed in a subsequent letter published in the edition for October 10 to be "one of the most astonishing statements I have ever read in The Times." An editorial on Nicaragua published the day before included the equally astonishing and matchlessly cynical statement that for Congress "to have voted the money, moreover, without clear ground rules opens Nicaraguans to the agony of endless battle," as if $100 million in military aid *with* clear ground rules would have any other consequence.

Looking at *The Times*'s editorial appointments—and I continue to hold that they should be subject to hearings and confirmation in Congress—it seems possible that one day the top editorial men will be Leslie Gelb and Jack Rosenthal, who both came to prominence in government service, one in the Pentagon and the other in the Justice Department. If this were the Soviet Union, Gelb's shuttling between government and press, not to mention his limber and prudent coverage of the Administration in the past few years, would be held up as exemplars of a system unacquainted with the traditions of a free and independent press. But this is not *Pravda*. It's *The New York Times*, whose departing editor discovered a burning enthusiasm for the People's Republic of China just as its leaders rounded up several thousand supposed criminals, trundled them around in trucks amid public derision and then executed them. (Imagine the uproar if this had happened in the Soviet Union.) No doubt nourished by this, A.M. Rosenthal became an energetic "new China hand." His forthcoming twice-weekly column will be an added burden to our lives.

Dean Baker for Congress

Among those who may benefit from the President's determined failure at Reykjavik to foster world peace may be a 28-year-old economics instructor from Ann Arbor named Dean Baker. As I can attest from a couple of visits to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor has an exceptionally vigorous movement opposing U.S. intervention in Central America and holds Juigalpa, east of Managua, as its sister city. This past May these activists agreed that Carl Pursell, the incumbent five-term Republican Representative from the state's second Congressional district, had to be challenged. In his current term Pursell has voted for Star Wars, the MX, nerve gas and, four times, for military aid to the *contras*, thus provoking two sit-ins in his office, during both of which Baker was arrested. Baker has decided to take on Pursell.

The first task was to win the Democratic primary against milksop mainstreamer Donald Grimes, who had been campaigning since 1984 and had the endorsement of the state A.F.L.-C.I.O., the U.A.W., four out of five county Democratic leaders and the *Detroit Free Press*. Grimes spent $27,000. Urging that the United States get out of Central America, cut the military budget, gain jobs for the unemployed and increase social spending, Baker spent $3,400, and won by 416 votes.

Now he faces Pursell in a district that includes Ann Arbor, the depressed industrial town of Jackson and the Republican suburbs of Plymouth and Livonia. Pursell has the money—$180,000 at last reporting—but Baker, the mobilization, in the form of more than 600 campaign workers. He has also picked up the endorsements of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., U.A.W. and the Michigan Federation of Teachers. Pursell seems to have been rattled enough by private polls to agree to a debate on October 21 and to send out leaflets attacking his opponent by name. With the possible exception of Reese Lindquist's challenge of Republican Representative John Miller in Seattle, no other race this fall has a challenger so clearly basing a campaign on opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America. Baker's task is arduous in the extreme, since Pursell is immeasurably better funded and has regularly carried the district by margins of about two to one, but the opportunity is there and already Baker and his co-workers have shown the strength of a single-issue movement when it inserts itself energetically into the political mainstream.

Kaldor's Death

With the death of Nicholas Kaldor, the last giant of the University of Cambridge economics department has gone. Preceeding him to the grave were Maurice Dobb, Joan Robinson and Piero Sraffa. These people carried forward the tradition of left Keynesianism, which in the work of Dobb and to a certain extent Robinson and Sraffa blended into Marxism. They surrounded Keynes as the ideas of the General Theory were fleshed out and subsequently fought to save from what Robinson called bastard Keynesians the central radical message that capitalism is inherently unstable and unjust and that vigilant public control over market processes is essential. One of Kaldor's contributions to reason in recent years was his tireless assault on Milton Friedman and his school, as prosecuted in *The Scourge of Monetarism*.

Neither in Great Britain nor here is there a group of equivalent distinction to that of the Cambridge school. In power are the monetarists and the supply siders; in the wings are the pallid remnants of watered-down Keynesians, exemplified by Robert Eisner and Charles Schultze. In this orthodox perspective Robert Reich and Lester Thurow represent the outer limits of Bolshevism. There is an increasing number of radical economists. What we need now is a surge in their scope and effectiveness that would fully honor the tradition of Kaldor and his comrades.

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ARTICLES.

FROM ICE-NINE TO ICE-MINUS

Regulating Altered Genes

CHARLES PILLER

A new presidential policy directive regulating the development and release into the environment of the products of biotechnology, signed by Ronald Reagan on June 18, greatly relaxes restrictions on what many environmentalists see as an already dangerously underregulated industry. It follows months of alarming news reports that genetically altered living organisms have been illegally or improperly released into the environment. The incidents reveal a profound conflict among scientists over what impact those organisms may have on plants, animals and the ecosystem.

At the heart of the debate are genetically altered organisms developed as pesticides, animal vaccines and frost protectors for plants. Although much of the research is conducted at universities, each project involves private companies that hope to profit enormously. The stakes are high. According to a report from the General Accounting Office, the Agriculture Department alone, which oversees some agricultural applications of biotechnology, is reviewing eighty-seven gene-altered products that could be ready for field tests within a few years. Other agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, responsible for microbes that act as pesticides, and the Food and Drug Administration, which monitors human and animal drugs, expect many more companies to seek approval for field tests soon.

The most controversial organism is a form of the common bacterium *pseudomonas*, which a company in Oakland, California, called Advanced Genetic Sciences (AGS) wants to market under the name Frostban. It is a "deletion" product—altered by removing genes, the basic hereditary units, rather than by adding genes from another organism. Dubbed "ice-minus" by the press, the bacterium colonizes on leaves, inhibiting frost formation when temperatures drop to a few degrees below freezing. Crops now destroyed by minor cold snaps could survive them if sprayed with the product.

The E.P.A. issued a field-test permit for the company but rescinded approval in March, after revelations that AGS had violated the agency's rules by injecting ice-minus into trees on the roof of its corporate office and by testing the organism in an open greenhouse. The agency fined the company $20,000—later reduced to $13,000—the first E.P.A. penalty levied for gene-splicing tests and one of the largest fines ever ordered for a violation in agricultural research.

Charles Piller is writing a book on military use of the new genetic technologies, to be published by William Morrow.

But the E.P.A.'s action did not presage tough regulation in the future. The new Federal policy assumes that deletion products, created by the removal of one or two genes and alterations involving "regulator genes," which control functions of other genes, are benign. Both categories are virtually exempt from review. On September 29 the National Institute of Health's Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee seemed to fall into line with this policy when it voted to drop its special scrutiny of deletion products.

Some leading scientists expressed outrage at this part of the new framework. "It is a medieval scientific view that a deletion is automatically less risky," Jonathan King, professor of molecular biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, told *The New York Times*. "This decision has the look of a response to commercial pressures to weaken regulations."

On July 15, Jeremy Rifkin, a prominent opponent of genetic engineering, filed suit against the E.P.A. in U.S. District Court to halt all approvals of field tests for genetically altered organisms. Rifkin claims the government adopted its new biotechnology policy without preparing an environmental impact statement and without keeping adequate records of the policy's development, as required by Federal law. A lengthy legal battle is sure to follow. The case will probably be heard before the end of the year.

Fear of molecular alteration is deeply rooted in the public mind. In *Cat's Cradle*, a popular 1974 novel by Kurt Vonnegut Jr., scientists develop a substance that freezes water at very high temperatures. "Ice-nine," which allows troops to cross rivers on solid ice, even in summer, eventually destroys the earth. Nearly every informed person in this debate views the prospect of a wildly proliferating microbe laying the ecosystem to waste as farfetched. Many genetic engineers complain that some critics nevertheless fuel controversy by playing on such public fears. They further argue that genetic manipulations are akin to age-old agricultural crossbreeding, or the use of live, attenuated viruses as vaccines.

The critics counter by saying they don't have to evoke science fiction to make their point. They cite the disastrous precedent of Dutch elm disease, caused by a fungus, which virtually eliminated the American elm from many parts of the country, and the blight that similarly destroyed the American chestnut tree. Both were caused by the unintentional introduction of foreign organisms.

Most scientists doubt that microbes released in a small test could survive long in the environment. Genetic alteration usually weakens organisms and thus reduces their prospects for successful competition against infinitely more numerous, naturally adapted microbes. But no scientist will rule out the possibility.

"One can paint worst-case scenarios and these are plausible," said Martin Alexander, a soil microbiologist at Cornell University who evaluated the AGS test plan for the E.P.A. "One can paint no-problems scenarios and these are also plausible." He concluded that for ice-minus the risk is low enough to proceed.

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But E.P.A. biologist Fred Betz told an agency panel reviewing ice-minus last year, "Under certain conditions that have not been tested, mutants may in fact have the ability to compete and displace their natural counterparts." Critics say organisms may spread beyond test sites, mutate and become pathogenic, or affect especially vulnerable individuals—the elderly, the sick and children—as well as plants or animals, in unforeseeable ways.

Most ecologists agree with the E.P.A.'s study group on biotechnology that the science of predictive ecology is in its infancy. There is no consensus about how much and what type of data is required to make decisions about the effects of genetically altered substances. Therefore, according to Sheldon Krimsky, professor of environmental policy at Tufts University and a leading authority on genetic engineering regulation, "the release of novel life forms [is] a game of ecological roulette."

The Federal policy was designed to clarify vague and overlapping jurisdictions of several regulatory agencies. David Kingsbury, an assistant director of the National Science Foundation and the architect of the policy guidelines, said the newly coordinated system will result in more stringent oversight. But critics maintain that it is too soon to tell whether he is right. Each agency's regulations still contain ambiguous language that contributes to gross misinterpretations and makes it easier to dodge the law. AGS claimed, for example, that injecting ice-minus under the bark of trees on the roof of its offices did not constitute an environmental release as defined by the E.P.A.

There is little reason to be optimistic that the new policy will clear up such problems. The G.A.O.'s study of the Agriculture Department's biotechnology oversight noted glaring flaws and gaps in the department's rules. What's more, agencies exacerbate the problem by sometimes ignoring the regulations they do have. The Agriculture Department violated its own rules by failing to consult its advisory committee before allowing the marketing of a genetically altered swine vaccine. In addition, the E.P.A. sections that evaluate many field-test projects are slated for a 44 percent budget cut, Krimsky noted. He said that even now the agency does not have enough molecular biologists and ecologists to assess all the products that are being introduced into the marketplace.

The Federal regulators' apparent uncertainty about every announced field test or field-test plan has resulted in widespread suspicion among the public, and as a result several communities have established their own regulations. Monterey County, California, banned tests on ice-minus for months. These actions resemble the growing local resistance to other potentially dangerous technologies, such as nuclear waste disposal.

Ironically, it may be the so-called insurance crisis, rather than scientific or community opposition, that leads to more effective regulation of the biotechnology industry. Hardly any biotech firm or research institution in the United States has insurance for tests involving the release of altered organisms, according to Rifkin, and without coverage none could afford to pay the damages caused by an ecological debacle. Rifkin filed suit June 9 against the E.P.A. to compel the agency to enforce laws that require adequate coverage and to halt field testing until the question is resolved.

It is difficult to oversee or even to talk clearly about biotechnology because so many scientists are employed by or even own shares in companies that anticipate enormous profits from the new technology. "Most of the leading molecular geneticists, on whom we must depend for our understanding of the products generated by genetic engineering, have commercial affiliations," Krimsky said. Conflicts of interest are unavoidable. The public cannot properly evaluate their statements because it is unaware of the corporate links.

In addition to scientists' direct financial involvement in biotechnology firms, industry funds may support up to 25 percent of all biotechnology research in American universities, according to two recent studies published in *Science*. Among faculty who receive industry support, 28 percent received at least half of their research funds from corporate sources.

Multinational firms, such as AGS, sometimes threaten to move overseas if U.S. regulation becomes too stringent. "What matters is that the research go forward," Joseph Bouckaert, chief executive of AGS, told *The Wall Street Journal*. "We will move forward, if not in this country then in Europe or Latin America." This prospect disturbs some scientists who fear that Japanese firms will come to dominate the biotechnology industry, as they have some fields of electronics. These scientists argue that delaying field tests may therefore be riskier than proceeding before all scientific questions are resolved.

According to Krimsky, the importance of the current debate over a handful of organisms slated for field tests far ex-

DRAWINGS BY BOB BOYLE

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ceeds their likely dangers. These cases are making scientific history and could form the basis for regulations that will flow from the new White House policy for years, perhaps decades. Without effective oversight, Krimsky said, "people may find the Luddite position—absolutely no tampering in the biosphere—the only rational choice." □

FARMERS AND THE LEFT

Little Cell On the Prairie

JAY WALLJASPER

With nearly 2,000 farm families going bust every week, distress is sweeping the American countryside. While Republican strategists are beginning to worry about their prospects in the heartland, some observers on the left see potential for widening the constituency for genuine political change in the United States.

A few years ago the left could no more number farmers in its coalition than it could count on the support of stockbrokers. Most farmers lined up behind Ronald Reagan in the 1980 election, partly to protest Jimmy Carter's grain embargo on the Soviet Union, which sent farm prices sliding. And despite four years of worsening conditions in the farm economy, they stuck with him in 1984, in the hope that recovery would eventually come their way. Even in Iowa, one of the rural states hit hardest, Reagan won 60 percent of farm family votes. By April 1985, *The Des Moines Register* reported, the President's approval rating among Iowa farmers dropped to 24 percent. Nationally, his approval rating among farmers slipped from 51 percent in late 1984 to 39 percent in April 1985, according to a poll conducted by *Successful Farming*.

In the months following the election, many farmers figured out that the policies outlined in Reagan's 1985 farm bill, which mandated lower prices for farm goods in order to increase sales abroad, were designed to help agribusiness, not working farmers. The price of corn, which costs an average of $3.25 a bushel to grow, has been cut in half over the past seven months, down as low as $1 a bushel. With such prices, farmers have no hope of paying off their debts. But the profits of grain-trading companies like Cargill or Continental Grain shoot up when crop and livestock prices drop.

Discontent with Reagan and the Republicans was apparent last month at the United Farmer and Rancher Congress, organized with money raised by Willie Nelson's two Farm Aid concerts. Around 1,500 delegates, representing farmers from thirty-eight states, met in St. Louis, and it was clear that most of them were looking for a political solution to their problems. The convention hall resounded with laughter when Jim Hightower, the Texas State Commissioner of Agriculture, diagnosed the farm crisis as a case of "Reagan mortis," and delegates leapt out of their seats when Jesse Jackson added a few new lines to his usual appeal for the Rainbow Coalition: "The same hands that picked cotton and picked beans and picked fruit can now pick congressmen and senators and Presidents."

Farmers, who now make up only about 3 percent of the U.S. population, don't have the numbers to win in Washington. Nevertheless, as farm activists point out, rural people make up 31 percent of the electorate, and most of them are economically or sentimentally attached to the family farm system. The Minnesota Agriculture Department calculates that every farm loss wipes out three to five other jobs, most of them in the same area. And Prairiefire, a rural advocacy group in Iowa, estimates that for every five to seven farms going under, one Main Street business shuts its doors [see Osha Davidson, "The Rise of the Rural Ghetto," *The Nation*, June 14, 1986]. That's the reason many small-town bankers, business owners, teachers and clergy—once the bedrock of the Republican Party in the Midwest—have joined the attack on Reagan's farm policy. In Missouri, three county-level Republican leaders made a much-publicized switch to the Democrats. In Minnesota a key coordinator in Reagan's 1984 statewide campaign, Dave Johnson, is now the Democratic opponent to U.S. Representative Vin Weber (a close colleague of conservative Georgia Representative Newt Gingrich). And in Nebraska three rural Republican legislators switched to the Democratic Party.

This year rural voters may decide who controls the Senate, with races in North Dakota, South Dakota, Idaho, Wisconsin, Missouri and Oklahoma. In 1988 rural voters could help pick the President by delivering dozens of electoral votes in states from Montana to Missouri and tipping the balance between suburban Republicans and urban Democrats in larger states such as Michigan, Ohio, Illinois and Texas. After all, it was the dismal state of the rural economy in 1958 that led to the Republicans' stinging defeat in Congressional elections and paved the way for John Kennedy's victory two years later.

The election of Hightower as commissioner in Texas was another sign of change in farm politics. Hightower pulled together an alliance of small farmers, Hispanics, blacks and liberals in 1982; he expects an easy re-election this year with the same formula. "The left has made a lot of misassumptions," he says. "For instance, they write off Texas as a conservative state. It is. But that doesn't affect how people go out and vote. They don't care about ideology. They want someone to come out and talk sense on the issues."

As head of the Democratic National Committee's Agriculture Council in 1983 and 1984, Hightower asked hundreds of farmers throughout the country what kind of Federal farm policy they'd like to see. He and his staff then teamed up with the Minnesota Agriculture Department to draft a new farm policy, which was introduced in Congress last year by Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa and Representative Bill Alexander of Arkansas [see Devorah Lanner, "A Farm Bill by and for Farmers," *The Nation*, July 6/13,

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1985]. The bill would do away with expensive foreign subsidies and instead set a minimum price for farm goods that would give farmers the chance to recoup their production costs. It would also take some land out of cultivation, enhance soil-conservation programs and boost food-stamp benefits.

Despite bitter opposition from the White House and intense lobbying by agribusiness interests such as Ralston-Purina and the National Food Processors Association, the bill attracted support from farm-state Republicans in the House. It was killed by a group of forty-seven big-city Democrats, including leading liberals Stephen Solarz, Barney Frank, Henry Waxman and Patricia Schroeder, who claimed it would result in higher food prices for the poor. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, however, gave the bill unanimous support. Farm activists condemned the urban Democrats who supported the Administration's farm bill and thereby dashed hopes of reaching a compromise with Reagan on farm policy in a House-Senate conference.

Hightower admits that his bill would cost consumers up to 4 percent more at the supermarket, but he compares this to the inevitable price increases that come when urban workers are helped by boosts in the minimum wage. Kevin Ristau, a bankrupt Minnesota hog farmer and a field coordinator for the League of Rural Voters, points out that a small increase in food prices now could forestall a much larger one that would come later if giant companies gain control of the food production system. He also notes that increases in food-stamp benefits and reduction in the cost to taxpayers for farm subsidies could compensate for higher costs at the checkout line.

Nearly everyone agrees that Reagan's farm program, which so far has cost more than the combined farm expenditures of every President from Roosevelt to Carter, is a disaster. Besides driving tens of thousands of families off the land, it has failed miserably in its own mission: boosting income from agricultural exports. Last summer, for the first time since 1957, the United States imported more food than it exported over a three-month period. In addition, the farm credit system is on the brink of bankruptcy because a large number of farmers aren't making enough money to meet payments on their loans [see Jim Schwab, "The Shaky Farm Credit System," *The Nation*, May 11, 1985].

It's against this bleak backdrop that Senator Harkin reintroduced his Save the Family Farm bill on September 23, and the farm movement has begun organizing across the Midwest using the Harkin bill as Exhibit A in its effort to draw rural people away from conservative politics.

Among the engines of this movement are the Minneapolis-based League of Rural Voters, which conducts media campaigns in fifteen states aimed at educating rural people about the issues at stake in Washington; the American Agriculture Movement, Inc., a lobbying group which grew out of the "tractorcade" protests of the 1970s and which recently has taken a turn to the left; and the North American Farm Alliance, a coalition of grass-roots groups based in Ames, Iowa, which strengthens the farm movement's links with labor and progressive organizations. Although most farm activists are stressing electoral politics this fall, they do not rule out direct action in the form of rallies, strikes and blockades.

With leaders whose politics were framed by the student radicalism of the 1960s and who opted for farming over graduate school, the progressive farm movement is adept at tying the farm crisis to other issues. "Farms, not arms" is a popular slogan seen on feed caps and T-shirts at farm rallies. At the farmers' congress in St. Louis a vice president of the United Automobile Workers and the president of Nicaragua's Farmers and Ranchers Union both drew hearty applause. Links have been forged with the environmental movement on behalf of soil-conservation programs, and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. has publicly supported the Harkin bill.

Jesse Jackson has become something of a hero to many rural people after helping protesters try to block foreclosure sales of some Minnesota and Missouri farms last year. Busloads of white farmers from ten states drove to the Rainbow Coalition's convention last April in Washington to show their support for Jackson. In North and South Caro-

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lina an activist group called the United Farmers Organization has set up chapters with white and black farmers in more than twenty counties. And in South Dakota several hundred farmers showed up on September 29 to protest Reagan's appearance in Sioux Falls.

As important as the organizations and the demonstrations are, some observers say the most significant change in rural America is in the way farmers view the world. "When politicians used to come out and talk to us," notes Roger Allison, a grain farmer and director of the Missouri Rural Crisis Center, "they'd tell us that our problems came because too many blacks were on welfare in the cities and because labor unions made too much money. But there's been a great awakening out here. We've realized that blacks are not our enemies, unions are not our enemies. We're all up against the same thing. Our problem is that we're politically powerless." Allison points to a coalition of farm, labor and civil rights activists in the Kansas City area as a model for progressive farm politics. The groups trade speakers and bring out people for one another's rallies.

Tom Quinn, a former dairy farmer and leader in the Wisconsin Farm Unity Alliance, asserts that farmers touched by these organizing efforts often reappraise their opinions on issues that reach beyond farm policy. "A lot of the people involved in the movement now, you might have called right-wing a few years ago. The man who is the president of our organization was someone you'd have called a redneck. But last year he spent several months in Mississippi helping black farmers deal with their creditors."

If all this sounds too good to be true—a *Little House on the Prairie* version of a radical's dream—it's instructive to recall that it's nothing new in American politics. "There's a strong tradition of farm politics with left ties going back a hundred years, starting with the Farmers' Alliance and the Populist Party on through the Progressive Party of Henry A. Wallace in 1948," says Dixon Terry, a dairy farmer and leader in the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition. Some of the American left's more notable accomplishments are rooted in rural populism: the Socialist Party's highest all-time local membership totals in Oklahoma before World War I, the state-owned bank and grain mill established in North Dakota by the Nonpartisan League and eight years of radical government in Minnesota under the Farmer-Labor Party in the 1930s. Yet like much of the left, the radical farm movement faded after World War II.

Since the 1950s the Agriculture Department under both Republican and Democratic administrations has promoted bigger farms using more machinery and applying larger doses of chemicals. According to the League of Rural Voters, 30 percent of American farmers left the land between 1950 and 1960, with 26 percent more leaving between 1960 and 1970. But it wasn't until the late 1970s, when the "get-big-or-get-out" policies began backfiring on many middle-class farmers, that the tractors converged on Washington and many state capitols.

Unfortunately, some of the farmers radicalized by those protests later succumbed to the arguments of the far right, which blamed either a Jewish conspiracy or the Federal Reserve System for the farm crisis. These extremists gained ground in the early 1980s because they correctly identified outside economic forces as the culprit—unlike most liberal politicians, who blamed "poor farm managers" for the crisis, and urban leftists, who generally ignored the problem. The left's current activity in rural areas may reduce the far right's drawing power among despondent farmers.

The new farm activists have a hard row to hoe. They must convince a majority of farmers, most of them individualists with little experience working in groups, that their problems can be solved through political action; that the farm crisis is a result of the same corporate attack on the American people that keeps unemployment rising and industrial wages slipping. The success of spreading this message throughout the countryside may save not only the family farm but progressive politics as well. □

INDIAN VOTING RIGHTS SUIT

Second Battle Of Big Horn

WILBUR WOOD

Big Horn County, Montana

American Indians may soon gain access to local governments that have been dominated up to now by white people. In only the second lawsuit ever brought under the 1965 Voting Rights Act on behalf of Indians, U.S. District Court Judge Edward Rafeedie has handed down a landmark pro-Indian ruling.

The judge, a Reagan appointee visiting Montana from Los Angeles, ruled in June that Big Horn County must dismantle its at-large voting system. That system has allowed white voters to elect white candidates to school boards and county offices in every election but one since 1924, the year that Indians got the right to vote.

Big Horn County, although appealing Rafeedie's decision, has followed his order to devise a district voting system that mirrors the concentrations of the Indian and the white populations in the nation. This means that votes for Indian candidates in predominantly Indian districts will not be diluted by white votes.

Hardin, Montana, the county seat, reminds me of a circle of covered wagons in Indian country. It perches near the confluence of the Big Horn and Little Big Horn rivers, fifteen miles from the hillside where Col. George Armstrong Custer's Seventh Cavalry was rubbed out by Arapahoe, Cheyenne and Sioux warriors in 1876. It sits just beyond the northern edge of the Crow Indian Reservation (Crows, by the way, scouted for Custer and warned him not to attack) and about forty miles west of the border of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

Wilbur Wood is a poet and a journalist who lives in Roundup, Montana.

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Parts of these two reservations constitute about two-thirds of Big Horn County—5,023 square miles of rolling plains, river valleys, foothills and mountains in southeast Montana, larger than the state of Connecticut. Yet only 11,000 people live in the county. Just under half of them are Indians, and 90 percent of the Indians live outside Hardin. Of the town's 3,500 residents, nearly 3,000 are white. One-third of all the people, but half of all the white people, in Big Horn County live in Hardin.

So when the white folks in Hardin decide to vote for a white candidate to the County Commission or to the board for either of the two school districts, that white candidate always wins. Well, almost always. In 1984, Wayne Moccasin became the first Indian ever elected to the board of trustees of School District 17H. He did it by convincing many of his supporters to "single-shot vote," that is, to vote for him only and not cast a second vote for one of the three white candidates also running for the two board positions. Had whites not split their votes among these three candidates, it is likely that Wayne Moccasin would have lost.

No Indian ever has won a seat on the three-member Big Horn County Commission. In the past only one commission slot came up for election at any one time, and although candidates had to reside in a certain geographical district, everybody in the county got to vote.

While just over 50 percent of the population in Big Horn County is white, just under 60 percent of the eligible electorate is white. Whites historically register and vote in greater proportions than Indians, although this has been changing over the past few years, and when whites vote, according to one study cited by Judge Rafeedie, they vote white somewhat more often than Indians vote Indian.

Based on such voting patterns—plus weeks of testimony about the systematic failure of county officials to appoint Indians to county boards and commissions, to hire Indians for county jobs, even to give voter registration cards to Indians—Rafeedie ordered the county to implement a district voting system in time for this fall's elections. The county's plan, approved by Rafeedie, contains three districts: the western end of the county, comprising two-thirds of Crow Reservation, Indians making up 55 percent of the population; the eastern end of the county, including parts of Crow and Northern Cheyenne reservations, Indians making up 77 percent of the population; and Hardin and the surrounding area, Indians making up only 12 percent of the population.

The first test of this new system came on September 30, in a primary election ordered by Judge Rafeedie. All three County Commission posts were contested, and six Indians were among the seventeen candidates. One Indian was successful. John T. Doyle, a Crow, beat two other tribal members in District 2 to win the Democratic Party nomination.

In District 1, however, three Indian candidates split the Democratic vote, allowing a white rancher to win the nomination. A disappointed Ramona Howe, the leading Indian vote-getter in that race, told me, "We Indians beat ourselves." She said she is strongly considering a write-in campaign as an independent, and she knows she would have to attract a large turnout of Indian voters.

Howe may have the numbers with her. In her district white candidates, both Democrat and Republican, received just twenty more votes than Indian candidates. In 1984, Indians helped elect the first Indian State Senator, Democrat Bill Yellowtail Jr., a Crow. They helped put a "pro-Indian" white man, James Ruegamer, on the County Commission in 1982. And it appears they'll be able to elect at least one Indian, Doyle, in District 2, to a commission post in the November 4 general elections.

Assuming Judge Rafeedie's decision holds up under appeal, it could have widespread ramifications. Concentrated Indian populations anywhere in the United States could consider voting rights suits. In Montana alone there are seven reservations within the borders of eighteen counties. According to Rafeedie, only two counties in fifty-six had district elections prior to his decision. At-large voting systems are not illegal unless they dilute the political participation of racial, ethnic, economic or political minorities, but in Montana, as in many other regions of the West, Indians compose the main minority group.

Already other Montana counties are seeking to avoid similar lawsuits by changing to district voting systems. In Billings, Jeffrey Renz, an attorney who worked on the Big Horn case, assisted by American Civil Liberties Union attorney Laughlin McDonald of Atlanta, told me that Glacier County, containing most of the Blackfoot Reservation east of Glacier National Park, has contacted him. I asked Renz about Rosebud County, which borders Big Horn to the east and in which lies the greater portion of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Renz was not optimistic about that county's voluntary compliance with the Voting Rights Act. "If the Cheyenne want to change Rosebud, they'll probably have to go to court," he said.

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In Big Horn County the A.C.L.U. represented eight plaintiffs: three Northern Cheyennes, two Crows and three whites. (Two of the whites were married to Indians; the other was "pro-Indian" County Commissioner Ruegamer.) This tribal cooperation for the purpose of the lawsuit may give a false impression of unity between two historical enemies.

Early on, the Crow tribe allied itself with the whites, while the Cheyenne were among those Plains Indians who fiercely resisted the invaders. A century later the Cheyenne and Crow still find themselves on opposite sides of an issue—coal development. The Crow have generally favored strip mining and power plants. The Cheyenne have generally opposed them.

Cheyennes are a small minority in Big Horn County, only 7 percent of the population, and they fear that in the three-district system their votes will be swallowed up by votes from the more numerous Crow, who are unlikely to vote for Cheyenne candidates. Even though some Indians will gain representation under the county's new plan, the Cheyenne argue that others will not. So last July the plaintiffs proposed a five-district system, with one district to include Cheyenne reservation lands. But Judge Rafeedie, showing some annoyance, turned them down and called the county's three-district plan fair and generous.

"Fair" and "generous," of course, are not words that describe white treatment of Indians throughout history. "Indians have lost land, had their economies disrupted, and been denigrated by the policies of government at all levels," Rafeedie acknowledges in his decision. The "NO DOGS OR INDIANS" signs in some restaurant and store windows in Hardin have been gone since the 1950s, but Indians in Big Horn County do not fare well compared with whites.

For example, the average Indian life expectancy is only forty-six years, while for whites it is seventy years. Indian per capita income is only $2,987, less than half that of whites. The rate of Indian unemployment is 32.6 percent, eight times that of whites. And actual Indian unemployment may run closer to 50 percent. In 1983, before this voting rights suit was filed, only 2.3 percent of full-time Big Horn County employees were Indian. That is now up to 8 percent, but at least 40 percent of the voting-age, and therefore employable, county population is Indian.

Whites in Big Horn County complain that Indians pay no taxes on reservation lands, forcing the county to provide services without receiving revenue. This is partially true. Lands held in trust for a whole tribe by the Federal government, as well as lands allotted to specific members of a tribe, are not taxable. However, the Federal government does pay money to the county in lieu of property taxes for these lands. In addition, much reservation land, especially that of the Crows, has been sold piecemeal over the years to whites. Large chunks of what remains are leased to white farmers and ranchers.

All this shows that the problems on Indian lands extend far beyond school-board and county elections. But making certain that Indian votes do count on a local level can at least be a beginning. □

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Korean War

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

Such verdicts were integral to the raucous domestic policies of the 1950s, and they are intensely relevant in the 1980s. Ronald Reagan's mind is fully shaped by this period. There's no substitute for victory, he said, campaigning in 1980; we ought to roll back Communism, he said last year.

Each verdict embodies a particular amnesia. Acheson thought Korean War I, the war for containment, was the high point of the Truman Administration. "Korea came along and saved us," he said. He forgot that it became an unlimited war. When he remembered, it induced schizophrenia. He called the march to the Yalu "an incalculable defeat to U.S. foreign policy [which] destroyed the Truman Administration," and the worst American defeat since Bull Run—another revealing analogy. Korean War II, the war for rollback, was a debacle. But, he assumed, this happened not to him but to his bête noire, Douglas MacArthur.

There was also a "substitute for victory"—i.e., stalemate—because who knew what victory meant in Korea, or what victory could be obtained? A march into Manchuria? A contest for mainland China? If MacArthur saw no substitute for victory, he likewise saw no limit on victory: each victory begged another war.

The consensus on Korea is well known. It was a success for containment, a failure for rollback—the latter, MacArthur's fault. But there are other, more interesting ways of structuring debate on the war. The unmentioned but discernible verdict of the antiwar New Left was that Korea was not Vietnam, nor was it Iran, Guatemala or Cuba. Korea is

Bruce Cumings is a professor of international studies at the University of Washington and author of The Origins of the Korean War *(Princeton University Press). A version of this essay was presented at the American Historical Association last December.*

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rarely listed in the panoply of U.S. interventions, and one senses the judgment, tiptoeing in on cat's feet, that Korea was a just war. Strange, since Korea was the only intervention that became a sustained military effort to displace a socialist regime—that is, the only full implementation of rollback. Nor is North Korea assumed to have had an authentic revolution. Perhaps the New Left verdict should be rendered: Korea was not a people's war, like Vietnam.

Stranger still, then, is the fact that the U.S. military and many civilian advisers saw Vietnam as another Korea. Their verdict: People's war can be defeated, unless the Chinese come in. The extensive guerrilla insurgency in southern Korea from 1948 to 1953 was rooted out, they argued (the final phase was named Operation Ratkiller), and the Korean People's Army was turned back, so why couldn't the same thing happen in Vietnam? But China must not be provoked.

The experience of invading North Korea and getting, as one American commander put it, "a glut of Chinamen" was a prime reason for the differing strategies of the two wars. There were invasions of Cambodia and Laos, but never of North Vietnam. In Vietnam it was the Chinese who said, This far and no farther. An American "success" in Vietnam would therefore be a limited war to get a Korean solution, dividing Vietnam permanently.

The most interesting verdict on Korea was the pristine one declared before the Chinese came in. Soldiers, journalists and diplomats saw immediately that this war was not the same as World War II. It was an all-encompassing, revolutionary, civil war, with no front lines, no distinctions between friend and foe. The Koreans all wore "white pajamas." The other verdicts have less to do with the war's reality than with the stitching together and mending of a torn national psyche. The stitching ought to be torn apart, in the interest of historical awareness of the era in which we live.

In 1966 Dean Acheson dismissed critics of the Vietnam War with contemptuous asides to the effect that all their arguments could just as easily have been made about Korea. And last year, in a *Harper's* retrospective on Vietnam, Edward Luttwak, a senior fellow at the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, called El Salvador "a tiny country with a few flea-bitten guerrillas," adding, "If our country was not traumatized by Vietnam, the whole affair would be concluded very quickly, I assure you."

No conflict rent the national psyche as the Vietnam War did, but when it ended the verdict on that thirty-year war seemed so clear that amnesia was the best remedy. Vietnam was not a just war. Containment advocates agreed with rollback advocates: it was a defeat. But no sooner had amnesia made Vietnam into a tabula rasa than an attempt began to reverse the verdict: the United States never lost a battle in Vietnam; our forces were invincible. Defeat came in Congress, or from the failed doctrines of a generation of leaders, or in the streets of America.

The curious thing about the recent debate on the Vietnam War is its increasing Koreanization. As the memory of the war recedes, voices begin to argue that we should have gone to the heart of the enemy power, not worrying about the Chinese (a rollback argument), or that we could have

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limited our goals to the establishment of a stable South Vietnam (a containment argument). The Vietnam War begins to look more like the Korean War—not the actual war but the figment of received and unexamined wisdom called the Korean War.

The best place to find this curious revisionism is in the book *On Strategy*, by Harry Summers, a serious inquiry into the sources of American military failure in Vietnam. Summers argues that lessons of the Korean War affected the way the Vietnam War was fought. He says the war in Vietnam was similar to the one in Korea but that it was wrongly perceived as different by the public. It was basically a conventional war, fought by large armies, and it was finally won with a major conventional assault. The rest of us saw it as a guerrilla war, a people's war, when it was not; we sought to use counterinsurgency against it, which was the wrong approach to the wrong problem. The wrong lessons from Korea froze us into a policy that "called for the *containment* rather than the destruction of communist power." Instead, we should have taken "the strategic offensive," had it been politically possible to do so.

The war in Vietnam, he says, began "on a different key" from the Korean War. With no parallel to the North Korean attack of 1950, the character of the Vietnam War was obscured. A cogent point except that it sidesteps the question, When exactly did the Vietnam War begin? 1965? 1957? 1945? 1931? Summers is among the first to ask and answer the question, Who started the Vietnam War? He wishes to identify it as an international war across "free boundaries," instead of as a civil and revolutionary war; he wants to make it another Korea, about which the *only* question people think to ask is, Who started it?

The North Korean assault, Summers thinks, "left no doubt as to the nature of that war." The North Vietnamese did the same thing, he says, but at the end of the war, instead of at the beginning. Thus, we misunderstood the real nature of the Vietnam War. In fact, however, the absence of U.S. protection panicked both southern regimes so much that each one collapsed almost overnight.

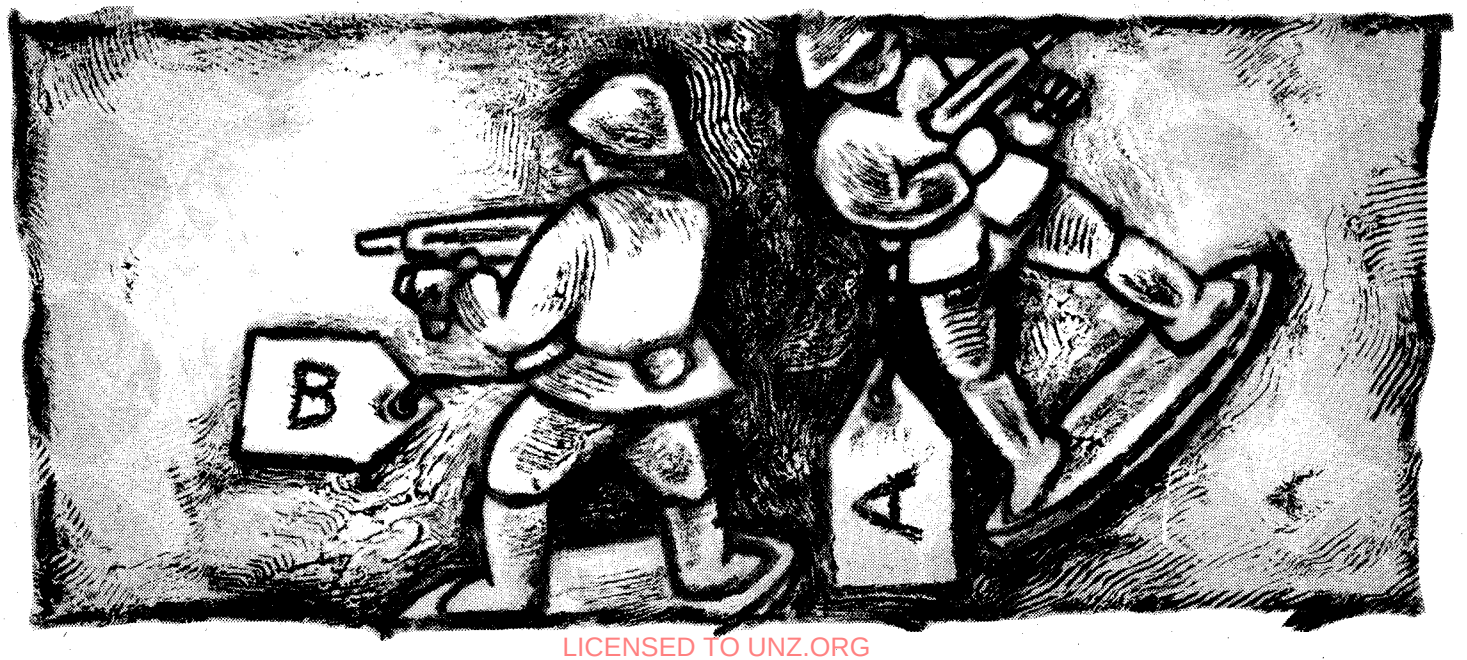
The inability of the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Vietnam to resist their northern cousins was ultimately a result of the social and political character of the two regimes, not the types of warfare or levels of weaponry. And that, in turn, led to the southern regimes' reliance on foreign power and their failure to enact fundamental social reforms demanded by the majority of the population, which had touched off civil and revolutionary war. Summers never considers this, viewing both southern regimes as innocent—and perhaps free and democratic—victims of external attack.

The Vietnam War was not purely a guerrilla war; Summers is right about that. But has there ever been a purely guerrilla or people's war? In China the decisive battles of the civil war, such as the Hwai-Hai campaign, were fought by two of the largest conventional armies in world history. Because Summers wishes to deny the political, civil and revolutionary character of the Vietnam War, he makes this false distinction between guerrilla and conventional war. Vietnam becomes Korea, thus becoming Vietnam.

Yes, Vietnam was another Korea—because Korea was a civil and revolutionary war. In retrospect it is clear that the great power of the United States in the 1950s, and the extraordinary suppression of dissent in America, made it possible to close the book on Korea without ever writing it in the first place.

U.S. strategy in Vietnam was, indeed, restricted to containment. Summers both advocates rollback ("the strategic offensive") and implies that it was politically impossible; he thinks that either containment or rollback would have worked had our ends and means been properly aligned.

What he ignores is the greatest foreign policy and domestic political crisis of the postwar period: what we know as the Truman-MacArthur controversy, but what was essentially a deep-running conflict over the New Deal at home and the victory of Europe-centered internationalism abroad. The debacle of rollback sharpened this conflict to the point where it threatened the American state. The Chinese kept us from expanding the war, and that,



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combined with the searing domestic turmoil, put lasting limits on the rollback of established socialist regimes, as opposed to the new governments in Cuba in 1961 or Grenada in 1983.

Now, what might have happened in domestic politics in the late 1960s had Lyndon Johnson or Richard Nixon carried out contingency plans for an invasion of North Vietnam, and got "a glut of Chinamen"? Summers's sleight of hand in citing "political limits" ignores the domestic consequences of rollback in 1950, implicitly suggesting that it could have worked in Vietnam.

The ultimate failure of Summers's analysis, however, returns us to the methods of history. A long view of the U.S.-Soviet conflict, citing Lenin and not Clausewitz, would see Korea, Indochina and now Central America as peripheral wars, not crucial to the global conflict between capitalism and communism. The ideal strategy, from the Kremlin's viewpoint, would be to get the Americans to hemorrhage blood and treasure in what Summers calls "tenth-rate backward nation[s]," while giving up very little itself. The Russians barely lost a soldier in Korea or Vietnam, nor will they fight in Central America—especially after their own experience with aggressive peripheral war in Afghanistan.

The Korean War nearly got us into a war on the Chinese mainland, made China dependent on the Soviet Union and made Sino-American relations impossible for a quarter-century. The Vietnam War contributed mightily to a growing inflation, a deep fever in the economic realm; it destroyed two presidencies; it shredded the foreign policy consensus, still rent and tattered today. With the lessons of Korea and Indochina still unlearned, the American giant now stumbles into Central America.

It is quite possible to arrive at the right conclusions for the wrong reasons, just as it is possible to ignore history but not to repeat it. Thus, the Summers book represents an important current of thought in the U.S. military, which rightly argues that the Vietnam defeat was not the fault of the military; never again should young Americans be sent into battle without public backing and a clear definition of the goals of the military engagement. If those two criteria are adhered to, there will never be another Vietnam.

But clear goals are the result of clear thought, and clear thought requires the faculty of memory. It is what Hannah Arendt called thoughtfulness. She sought to comprehend how Nazi leaders could have visited a holocaust on European Jewry, and she concluded that they never paused to examine first assumptions, to work toward self-awareness, to be thoughtful.

U.S. leaders are by no means Nazis. Nonetheless, when all the extenuating circumstances and special pleading are over and done with, a few generations hence, it will be seen that Americans visited mass slaughter on the Korean and Vietnamese peoples. (The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* estimates that 3 million Koreans died in the war, two-thirds of them civilians.) The only way to atone for that, short of dropping to one's knees in shame—appropriate but unlikely—is to think through why it happened, to reckon with it, a reckoning instead of a forgetting. □

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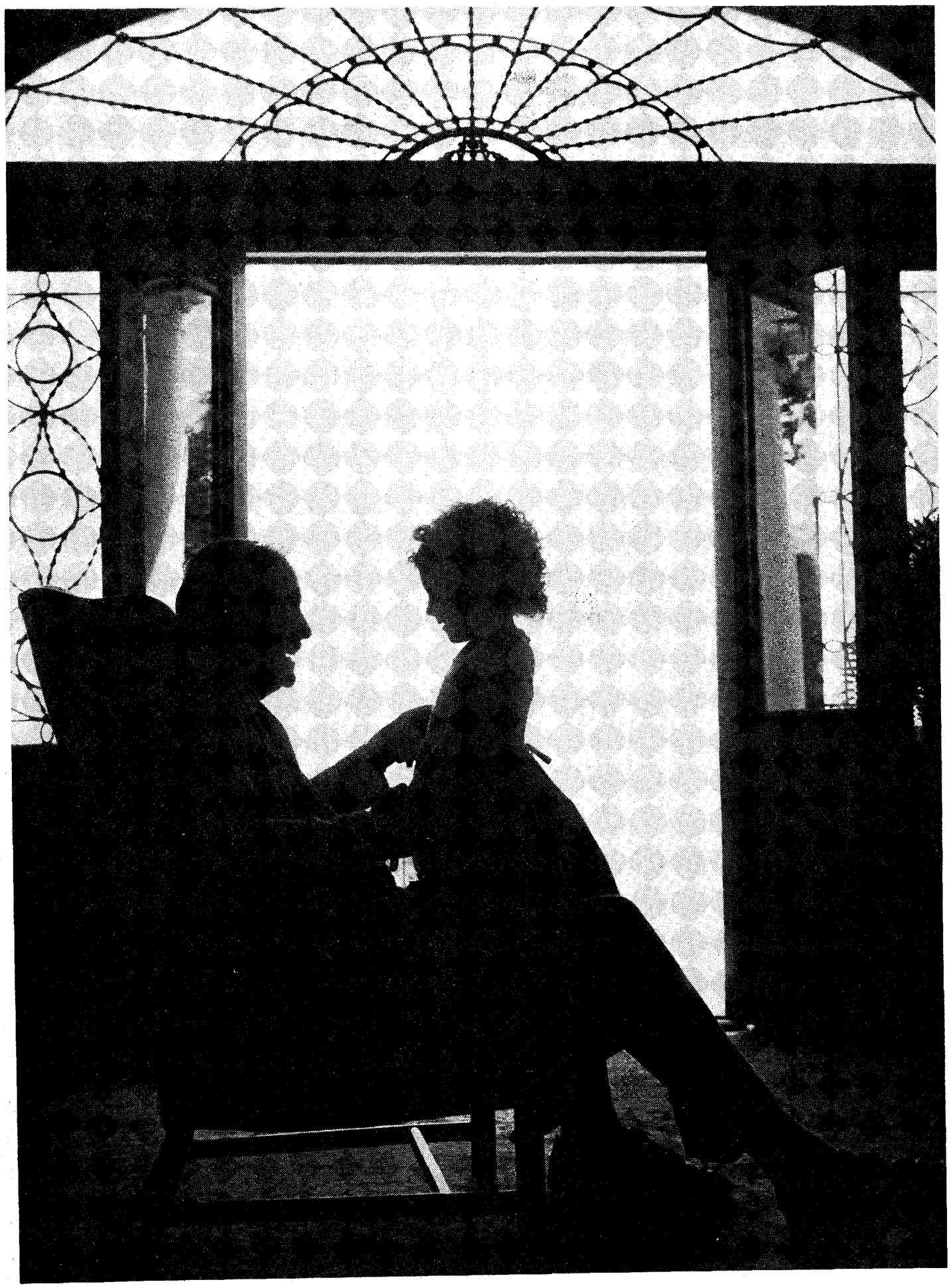

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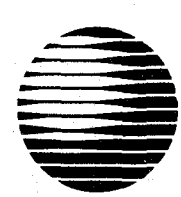

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Lenore Marshall Prize

The Lenore Marshall/Nation Poetry Prize of $7,500, awarded annually for an outstanding book of poems published in the United States, is sponsored by the New Hope Foundation in conjunction with The Nation. *Previous winners of the prize have been John Ashbery (1984), Josephine Miles (1983), George Starbuck (1982), John Logan (1981), Sterling A. Brown (1980), Stanley Kunitz (1979), Hayden Carruth (1978), Allen Tate (1977), Philip Levine (1976), Denise Levertov (1975) and Cid Corman (1974).*

This year the prize has been awarded to Howard Moss for his book New Selected Poems *(Atheneum). The judges were Rachel Hadas, Richard Howard and J.D. McClatchy, who has contributed the accompanying essay.*

There were nearly 150 books for the judges to sift through this year. Three of them were by former winners, and the list of finalists read like an honor roll of contemporary American poets. In the end, the judges were unanimous in their choice of Howard Moss to receive the 1986 Lenore Marshall Prize. Their decision is meant to single out a book of exceptional merit, and also to honor a body of work four decades in the making.

New Selected Poems is not just a collection of superb work. It is a long look at a career that has unfolded in surprising ways, and without the kind of critical recognition that has sustained others. The urbane but astringent lyricism of Moss's first book, *The Wound and the Weather* (1946), heralded a distinctive voice. Over the next forty years and in ten subsequent books, culminating in this definitive selection from them all, Moss has refined and darkened that voice. Without sacrificing the wit and rhythmic finesse that characterized his poems from the start, he has come to write with a more searching complexity or with a more startling simplicity as his subject demands, and everywhere his poems speak eloquently of the wounds of experience, the weather of the spirit.

In his essay "The Poet's Voice," Moss once identified the problem of establishing a human voice for itself as a central theme in the poetry of the last half-century. Art is a civilized, not a natural phenomenon, and there will always be a "pull between speech and eloquence . . . how to speak in the name of something real without being merely commonplace." To solve this problem, Moss himself has never sought—as so many others have—a temporarily striking fashion. He is not ornate or homely, journalistic or swaggering or surreal. He never preens: his poetry is neither a public platform nor a private salvation. Instead, he has cultivated the gift of a true style, a manner of heightened but human speaking that is as unique as a voiceprint.

We recognize a Howard Moss poem at once. It never fakes a pleasure or an insight. It does not pretend to emotions it does not feel. Though he can make phrases with the best, as when he calls Venetian palazzi "spun-stone" or Jackson Pollock's paintings "wounded linoleums," his rhetoric is calculated not to impress but to confide and suggest, ponder and console. And especially in his later books, it is charged with a poignant wisdom and rare feeling.

Moss speaks in a quiet tone of voice, and sometimes an elusive one. One must listen attentively—too great a demand on many readers today. He knows "how much restraint/Enhances skill," and how the poet can "sometimes sound the depths/With the lightest touch." His is the style of the reflective intelligence: a sea surface, as he writes in "Bay Days," "Currents, always running, gauged to light/And wind, the depths varying the colors." He is not a discursive poet, but one for whom thinking and sensibility command the same impulses:

> What are ideas but architecture
> Taking nature to heart and sustaining
> Inviolable forms: the fleur-de-lis,
> The subtle acanthus, the shell-like dominions
> Of diamond accretions royal on coal,
> The Gothic tower and the rabbit warren,
> The fine interchange of matter and matter,
> The natural and social shiftings in the bonds
> Of dialogues and elegies that rise from soil.

Alert to the nuances of happenstance and meaning, he is also open to the underside, the dreamlife of art and memory and the unconscious. The architecture of ideas yields easily in Moss's work to what in one of his best poems he calls the "buried city" we set out each night to explore in ourselves. "To be a diver and a scholar both" is his ambition.

In this ambition he has linked himself to—and learned from—some of this century's major figures. If Moss's early work declares its allegiance to Auden and Yeats, his more mature poems owe something to James Merrill's heartfelt wit, and to Elizabeth Bishop's passionate detachment, her meticulous descriptions, her "sane imagination." Moss has made these qualities entirely his own, and added to them the narrative aplomb of those writers—like Chekhov and Proust, Eudora Welty and Elizabeth Bowen—his prose pays homage to. (Moss's *Minor Monuments: Selected Essays*, which should be read alongside his *New Selected Poems*, has recently been published by Ecco Press.)

Even in his early books there was a sharp satirical edge to some of his poems. "Drinks with X," "A Dead Leaf," "Ménage à Trois" and "Fern Dying" have an uncommon ability to make the reader laugh and wince at the same time. But the more compelling side to his work is the elegiac. Beginning with "Elegy for My Father" in *The Toy Fair* (1954), on to "Water Island" and "September Elegy" in *Finding Them Lost* (1965) and on through "Elegy for My Sister" in *Notes From the Castle* (1980), he has written haunting formal examples of this genre. Beyond that, there is a melancholy that pervades all his poems. Unlike the pruned tree which speaks in the poem of that title, Moss cannot say "Shorn, I rejoice in what was taken from me." Resigned and diminished, he turns back to what Freud called the ordinary unhappiness of life. The enduring cycles of nature—the seeds and seasons of growth and decay—are his standard, and he searches for his mysteries in the everyday.

These two sides to his temperament are not contradictory; it was Auden who said that an unimaginative or a cowardly or a happy person is seldom

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very amusing. Nowhere are satire and melancholy more appropriate, nowhere are isolation and diminishment more telling than in the city. Moss is the cosmopolitan genius of that infernal, exhilarating place. And is it because Manhattan is an island that I can also say he is most at home by water? Or because he lives near the ocean on Long Island? Even more than of the boulevard, he is a poet of the shoreline, of the margin between elements. The distance between mind and dream, or between survivor and ghost, the longing of settled habit for unsettling doubts, or of love for dissolution—these are the precarious in-between states he has charted with an uncanny accuracy. It has been exciting for his readers to follow that expedition, to listen to that human voice, and it is a privilege for the judges to award Howard Moss this year's Lenore Marshall Prize.

J.D. McCLATCHY

EINSTEIN'S BATHROBE

I wove myself of many delicious strands
Of violet islands and sugar-balls of thread
So faintly green a small white check between
Balanced the field's wide lawn, a plaid
Gathering in loose folds shaped around him
Those Princeton mornings, slowly stage-lit, when
The dawn took the horizon by surprise
And from the marsh long, crayoned birds
Rose up, ravens, maybe crows, or raw-voiced,
Spiteful grackles with their clothespin legs,
Black-winged gossips rising out of mud
And clattering into sleep. They woke my master
While, in the dark, I waited, knowing
Sooner or later he'd reach for me
And, half asleep, wriggle into my arms.
Then it seemed a moonish, oblique light
Would gradually illuminate the room,
The world turn on its axis at a different slant,
The furniture a shipwreck, the floor askew,
And, in old slippers, he'd bumble down the stairs.
Genius is human and wants its coffee hot—
I remember mornings when he'd sit
For hours at breakfast, dawdling over notes,
Juice and toast at hand, the world awake
To spring, the smell of honeysuckle
Filling the kitchen. A silent man,
Silence became him most. How gently
He softened the edges of a guessed-at impact
So no one would keel over from the blow—
A blow like soft snow falling on a lamb.
He'd fly down from the heights to tie his shoes
And cross the seas to get a glass of milk,
Bismarck with a harp, who'd doff his hat
(As if he ever wore one!) and softly land
On nimble feet so not to startle. He walked
In grandeur much too visible to be seen—
And how many versions crawled out of the Press!
A small pre-Raphaelite with too much hair;
A Frankenstein of test tubes; a "refugee"—
A shaman full of secrets who could touch
Physics with a wand and body forth
The universe's baby wrapped in stars.
From signs Phoenicians scratched into the sand
With sticks he drew the contraries of space:
Whirlwind Nothing and Volume in its rage
Of matter racing to undermine itself,
And when the planets sang, why, he sang back
The lieder black holes secretly adore.

At tea at Mercer Street every afternoon
His manners went beyond civility,
Kindness not having anything to learn;
I was completely charmed. And fooled.
What a false view of the universe *I* had!
The horsehair sofa, the sagging chairs,
A fire roaring behind the firescreen—
Imagine thinking Princeton was the world!
Yet I wore prescience like a second skin:
When Greenwich and Palomar saw eye to eye,
Time and space having found their rabbi,
I felt the dawn's black augurs gather force,
As if I knew in the New Jersey night
The downcast sky that was to clamp on Europe,
That Asia had its future in my pocket.

THE WARS

How can I tell you of the terrible cries
Never sounded, of the nerves that fail,
Not in jungle warfare or a southern jail,
But in some botched affair where two people sit
Quite calmly under a blood-red lamp
In a Chinese restaurant, a ludicrous swamp
Of affection, fear drowning in the amber
Tea when no word comes to mind
To stand for the blood already spilled,
For rejection, denial, for all those years
Of damage done in the polite wars?

And what do I know of the terrible cries
That are really sounded on the real hill
Where the soldiers sweat in the Asian night
And the Asians sweat where the soldiers flail
The murderous grass, and the peasants reel
Back in a rain of gasoline,
And the shells come home and the bombs come down
Quite calmly under a blood-red moon
Not far from China, and the young are killed,
Mere numerals in the casualties
Of this year's war, and the war of years?

He stands with a knife in the Daily News.
They are snaking their way into the hills.
She is walking up Broadway to hurt again.
They are fleeing under a hail of shells.
He is taking her neck into his hands.
A human seed squats in the dark.
She is scalding the baby in the bath.
He feels the bullet enter his skin.
She spits in the face of the riot squad.
They are sitting down, they are opening wounds.

From *New Selected Poems* (Atheneum), © 1985 by Howard Moss.

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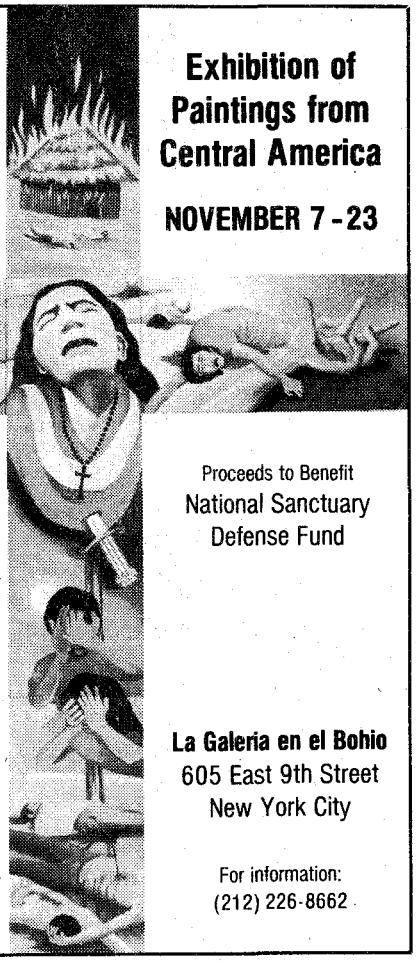

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'WERE THE ROSENBERGS FRAMED?'

This historic debate, which was sponsored by The Nation and The New Republic at New York City's Town Hall on October 20, 1983, has been described as "a political-literary brawl" (Los Angeles Times), at which "a cheering, jeering crowd of 1,500 followed every jab in a fight over history" (The Washington Post).

The main participants in the debate were: Walter Schneir and Miriam Schneir, authors, Invitation to an Inquest; Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, authors, and Sol Stern, research assistant, The Rosenberg File: A Search for the Truth; and Elizabeth Holtzman, moderator. There were also questions and comments from Michael Meeropol, Morton Sobell, Marshall Perlin, James Weinstein, Victor Navasky and others.

A complete record of this extraordinary event can now be purchased in transcript or cassette. Transcripts are available for $24 each; cassettes are $19 each. There are special discounts on orders of five or more. Send check or money order, payable to The Nation, to: "Rosenbergs," The Nation, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011 (a project of The Nation Institute).

NO HARM

No harm would walk in and sit down,
I thought, this fifth time trying on
The passionate gloves, the wary shoes,

A sea oblique in the window shades,
And a distant phonograph's music sound
From the next or the next-after-that apartment.

But harm was already gloved and shod
In my feeling for what was never there,
Or was there in some illusionary life

Of the past, its shadow and its substance.
Here, on a strange coast, the foggy mornings
Lift predictably each day at noon,

The colored lights of the nighttime garden
Weaken and go out, the lukewarm pool
Has nothing of the swift embracing hum

Of a good cold sea. The future's apparition
Is here with me. Come closer, closer,
So we can play our roles—human, ghostly.

RULES OF SLEEP

In the sludge drawer of animals in arms,
Where the legs entwine to keep the body warm
Against the winter night, some cold seeps through—
It is the future: say, a square of stars
In the windowpane, suggesting the abstract
And large, or a sudden shift in position
That lets one body know the other's free to move
An inch away, and then a thousand miles,
And, after that, even intimacy
Is only another form of separation.

MORNING GLORY

For Lee Krasner

Its wrinkled foreskin, twisting open, opens
The silky membrane of a French umbrella;
Within the lighted tent of the corolla
A five-ribbed shape (starfish invention!)
Supports, at the sun's behest, by tension
The small filament plumb at the center.

How blue is blue, how deft the manufacture
Of nature to define a color in a flower,
Balloon, trumpeter, and mountain climber
Among green hearts diagonally placed
In a matching, alternately rising pattern
On the overreaching wire of a stem

Always trying to ensnare another,
A string, anything, as long as it's above—
Chicken wire, trellis, fence rail, nail—
As if transcendence were simply a matter
Of going up and up, and up until
There's no place left in the world to go.

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MUSIC.

EDWARD W. SAID

Nearly half a century after his death, Richard Strauss's role in twentieth-century music remains an unresolved matter. No one disputes his talents, his professionalism, his often unusual musical imagination. Yet his work, after an initial flirtation with advanced chromaticism, remained solidly within the tonal tradition established by Wagner and Brahms, even though it is also true that he elaborated that tradition as no one else could or did. He went on writing songs, operas, chamber music and occasional orchestral pieces well into and even after the Third Reich, leaving questions as to his complicity with or his innocence about the going order; at the same time he seemed to develop his fairly narrow aesthetic into an expressiveness roughly comparable to that attained by the early Viennese school, Stravinsky and Bartók. His brooding and deeply affecting string work, *Metamorphosen*, is a case in point, one of the summits of twentieth-century music, written in the early 1940s in an idiom that had matured four decades earlier.

Strauss's opera *Die ägyptische Helena* is one of the most problematic of his works. A product of the remarkable collaboration between Strauss and the great Viennese poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Helena* took five fitful years to complete. It had its premiere in 1928, but has not been staged in this country for more than fifty years. This summer, however, it was one of the operas presented by The Santa Fe Opera, now in its thirtieth season.

There are few places as fitting as Santa Fe for performing anomalous and unusual works, and fewer still where a summer festival is held with such conviction and interest. The stunningly designed opera house stands a few miles outside the town; although its sides and part of its top are open to the winds its acoustics are fairly lush. Set designers routinely employ the surrounding twilit mountains and valleys as a backdrop to suggest the distances of legend on which many operas are based, or, when the summer light has disappeared altogether, to project the darkness of the sea, the mystery of the desert, as in Acts I and II of *Helena*.

Edward W. Said will be writing a regular column on music.

Most things about the Santa Fe Opera festival accentuate, rather than mute, the extraordinary contradictions at work in the music business today. One can fly there in about three hours, and yet Santa Fe is about as far from New York and the East Coast in general as it is possible to get, and this distance is emphasized by its unusually interesting and thoughtfully selected repertory, its well-prepared productions and the absence in its roster of big-name stars, whether singers or conductors. Why, you ask yourself, has it been possible for Santa Fe to put on successful performances of Britten, Henze, Zemlinsky, Virgil Thomson, Stravinsky, Berio, Ravel, Janáček and Villa-Lobos, plus a fair complement of Puccini, Verdi, Rossini and Mozart, while the Met and the other establishment houses hardly even try?

Performances of Richard Strauss's operas—including the rarely seen *Daphne*, *Die Liebe der Danae* and *Capriccio*, plus standard favorites like *Elektra* and *Der Rosenkavalier*—lead the Santa Fe list in number and frequency. Perhaps this is because John Crosby, the festival's director and chief instigator, is a Strauss fancier and a devoted (if not always inspired) conductor of his music. *Helena* is certainly the rarest of the lot. It belongs with the group formed by *Ariadne*, *Daphne* and *Danae*, operas whose subject matter is classical myth treated either as commentary on aesthetic problems of interest to Strauss and von Hofmannsthal, or as an elucidation of domestic paradoxes which exposes the instability of sexual as well as social identity. Von Hofmannsthal and Strauss worked intermittently on *Helena* for five years without ever resolving the oddities in it. These peculiarities, I believe, are an important part of the opera which, alone among Strauss's later work, shows his astounding musicianship and competence— plus his unique talent for writing what the late Glenn Gould has called ecstatic music—constrained by material of a lesser order. Taking it on strikes me as an ideal procedure for summer festivals, which ought to (but rarely do) heighten the tensions and issues of interest woven into the fabric of twentieth-century music.

Menelaus was Agamemnon's brother and Helen's husband, and as such is a pivotal figure in the bloodiest and arguably the most famous pair of episodes in classical Greek culture: the Trojan War, the subject of Homer's *Iliad*, and the fall of the house of Atreus memorialized in Aeschylus's *Oresteia*. Yet in Book IV of *The Odyssey* Menelaus turns up as a rather comfortable king, with Helen once again at his side. Hofmannsthal was understandably fascinated by the transformation of Menelaus from a husband hellbent on revenge for the loss of his wife into a placid Spartan king thoroughly at peace with his lovely middle-aged spouse. In his extraordinary 1928 preface to the opera (reprinted in Ulrich Weisstein's valuable but out-of-print collection *The Essence of Opera*), Hofmannsthal says that the thought of Menelaus wandering through Priam's ruined palace the night Troy fell, looking for his wife—"this woman who was his beloved, abducted wife and, besides, was the most beautiful woman in the world, the cause of this war, of these frightful ten years, of this plain filled with dead men, and of this conflagration"—gripped him totally:

> What a situation for a husband! It transcends all imagination—no lines, not even lines which Shakespeare might have written, would be equal to it, and I am certain that Menelaus carried this woman . . . down to his ship in silence.

The libretto of *Helena* was Hofmannsthal's attempt to render what had occurred in the interval between *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Characteristically, however, Hofmannsthal invents a third figure, the sorceress Aithra, whose house and machinations on a Mediterranean island near Egypt supply the poet with two acts in which to effect the transformation. Menelas (as he is called in the German text) and Helena stagger onto Aithra's island after the ship transporting them from Troy is wrecked. Just before Menelas is about to slit Helena's throat with the very dagger he had used to kill Paris, Aithra greets them, and using her magic powers to dissipate the conflict between the pair changes Helena into a beautiful young maiden. When Menelas sees her a few moments later he does not recognize her; he accepts a drink of magic lotus juice from Aithra who convinces him that the real Helena was never in Troy but had been spirited away to Egypt during the offending decade. The young and lovely woman before him is his wife, and the two go off to a nuptial reunion.

Neither librettist nor composer could

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end matters there. Act II is one of the most unintentionally comic and tangled conclusions in any of Strauss's works: each episode engenders another, more improbable one, until, sensing the uselessness of extending the proceedings even further, composer and librettist manage a ceremonial finale with the entirely unanticipated appearance of Hermione, the couple's daughter, at its center. Along the way Strauss and Hofmannsthal devise an episode with Helena and two Arabian warriors, Altair and his son, Da-Ud, who appear out of the desert and are smitten by the woman's beauty; Da-Ud is killed during a hunting expedition, and Altair finally realizes that Helena is not to be his. This section of the opera is the occasion for the sort of "Eastern" music Strauss first tried out in *Salome*, but for the librettist, Altair and Da-Ud surely accentuated the curious polarity at work in the relationship between Helena and Menelas. Hofmannsthal writes in the preface that Menelas's morality and sense of guilt made him "to me the fatal embodiment of everything occidental, while in her, I saw the inexhaustible strength of the Orient." This rather pompous Orientalism is used, I think, to hide the difficulty of getting Menelas to change his mind convincingly, since in most of Act II he is as murderous as he was before drinking the lotus juice at the end of Act I. Even after a fantastic night with Helena he is still furious enough to kill her.

Often strident or glib, empty and almost unbearably complex, Strauss's music is at its most interesting when he is either letting one of the women soar away in "ecstatic" cantilena passages which no other romantic composer could match, or when two or more women sing together so sinuously as to suggest that his fascination with soprano voices in combination reflects an extraordinary obsession with the displacement of the male by the female. Rarely do any of the men in *Helena* have anything compelling to sing, and whatever ingenuity there is in Strauss's always flowing, disturbingly nonplussed line is reserved for orchestral color and his endlessly clever rhetorical skills. But in *Helena* his writing is so loaded with devices calling attention to themselves that one isn't even sure whether to listen or take notes on the resolutions he provides to various problems.

In point of fact, *Die ägyptische Helena* is a vast tissue of anomalies, contradictions and impossibilities; it is a strangely interesting opera for that reason. Hofmannsthal, for example, dreamed up a character called "alles wissende Muschel," or the all-knowing Mussel, a sort of resident prophetic shellfish in Aithra's employ who also happens to be a mezzo-soprano. Never one to be fazed by the most ludicrous challenges, Strauss wrote skillfully amiable music for this beast, although he was heard to whisper aloud during a dress rehearsal that the damn thing looked too much like a gramophone. Clearly then, with mussels, a sorceress and Arabian warriors jostling Greek heroes and heroines, the opera cannot be staged or witnessed as what it purports to be; there are too many crazy things going on, too many fatally confusing situations for it to be played as somberly as, say, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* usually is. The question as to what is to be done about it offers reason enough to attend one of its infrequent stagings.

Perhaps the best thing about the Santa Fe production—beside the fact that it actually took place—was its design, predominantly blue (for the sea) in Act I, yellow (for the desert) in Act II. Crosby is a dutiful rather than an interesting conductor, although it must be said that he certainly commands the various Straussian mannerisms or tics. In his monumental study of Strauss, Norman del Mar remarks that during rehearsals under the conductor Fritz Busch the musical effect of the whole seemed choppy since Strauss kept tinkering with the score. After a while everything went awry. Then Strauss took over and conducted with "one big, broad line" to totally different and apparently successful effect. This, at bottom, is what Strauss needs—and just missed getting in Santa Fe—a kind of willful suspension of disbelief not only in the laws of reality and history, but also in the laws of musical evolution: otherwise how could so many anachronistic and atavistic statements be made so brilliantly? There was some attempt to approach this effect at Santa Fe. The major problem was that no one—except the stunningly fluent Aithra, played by Sheryl Woods—was really first-rate and heedlessly soaring: not Helena (Mildred Tyree) who had a tendency to struggle at the top; not Menelas (Dennis Bailey) who just couldn't manage the long tessituras in the part; not Altair and Da-Ud (Michael Devlin and Glenn Siebert) who understandably never seemed to figure out what they were doing there. Clarity James as the Mussel was mellifluent and somber, although I couldn't help wondering how she explained the character to herself as she sang.

Hermann Broch argues in his often pitiless analysis of Hofmannsthal that operas like *Helena* belonged to the poet's denial of the real world and to his desire to give Vienna "a farewell festival" as its 1,000-year-old reign was ending. For his part Adorno, who respected Strauss's ability to "produce spontaneity by technique," saw in the "unfounded style" and suppleness of his later work what he called the Bazaar of the World, which stands next to the Grand Hotel: everything offered for display and sale, everything accommodated. Certainly it seems to me that any performances of the Strauss–Hofmannsthal works today have to take into account their dense cultural context, plainly referred to in the rich decadence of their aesthetic hermeticism, and the entire gamut of issues, both political and aesthetic, that these two supremely gifted and oddly unbalanced artists always touch upon. As an emanation of the desert sunset, Santa Fe's *Helena* seemed to inch toward an intellectually interesting statement because it was put on in so innocent and careful a way, and yet the statement never got made, since the ideology of undeveloped, unself-conscious performance was allowed to predominate.

Little of the sort can be said about New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, a hodgepodge of miscellanies if ever there was one. The festival's impresarios have shined up the proceedings to a great gleaming finish, with, alas, very little of interest to be discovered there. I attended some eight concerts, which seemed far too many. Avery Fisher Hall is positively awful if you have to go there more than once a month; nothing sounds really good in that hall and one is encouraged neither to hear acutely nor to think there. Add to that the routine performances with no guiding intelligence behind them and no perceivable style either to admire or to disagree with, and you have a thoroughly dispirited summer ritual put on for mostly well-behaved and appreciative crowds.

Something should be said about Gerard Schwarz, who is rapidly becoming our favorite music director. He runs a number of festivals, programs and or-

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chestras, from one end of the country to the other, and yet nothing I have heard him do seems to have any gravity or imprimatur at all. He conducts with about the same level of competence at all times and is amazingly available to more or less anything on the stand before him. He and Rampal bustled through the Mozart G major Flute Concerto with an almost insulting incongruence, and when near the end of the festival Schwarz and his overworked orchestra played out Mozart's opera *La Finta Giardiniera*, the result was, in Alexander Pope's phrase, "a universal yawn." It's hard to justify lusterless, uninflected, poorly thought-out performances of terribly uneven Mozart just because one might hear predictions of *Così fan tutte* in a few passages.

The absence of any coherent stylistic personality in the performances was noticeable throughout unless, as was the case with Charles McKerras's, it *was* noticeable for flaccid, disastrously sloppy and, in my opinion, scandalous work. The irony was that the redoubtable Alicia de Larrocha had to contend with Sir Charles first in the Mozart A major Rondo, where her ever-reliable fingers and superbly acute sound triumphed, then in the D minor Concerto; in that piece, she had already resorted, perhaps out of fatigue (she seems to play more concerts than anyone alive) or boredom, to "pearly," tinkly Mozart. There were some other fine moments: the great Richard Goode in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 25 in C major (K. 503), and Heinz Holliger sculpting an extraordinary oboe performance—a lot of it wonderful acting and physical gestures—out of a totally forgettable piece by one Franz Kommer.

The extent to which apparently extramusical factors such as personality, memory and gesture enter into the creation of powerful music-making was borne out during the concert led by Robert Shaw. Currently the conductor of the Atlanta Symphony, Shaw came to public attention thirty years ago as the founder of the Robert Shaw Chorale and, especially in the choral sections of Toscanini's rendition of Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, as the person responsible for producing the most accomplished choral singing in this country. He has the mannerisms of a modest man, but his work is anything but that: I was impressed by his broad, often overstated lines and massive climaxes in the Mozart C minor Mass

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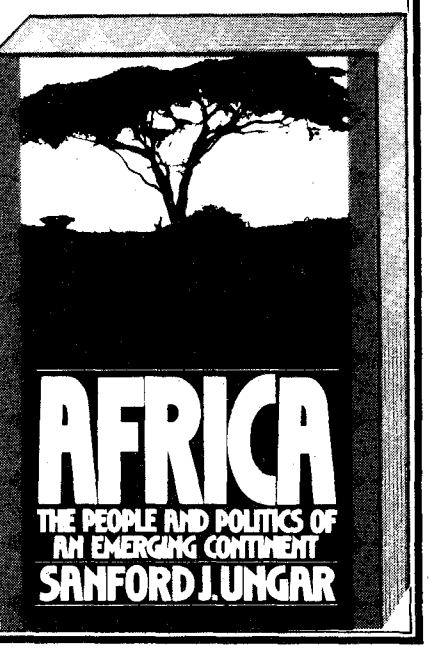

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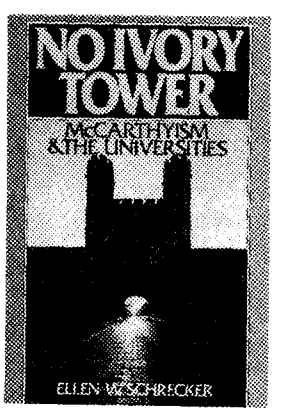

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(easily the pinnacle of Mozart's church music), and the strength of his work in the Beethoven Choral Fantasia for which Rudolf Firkusny was the seemingly unwilling soloist. Robert Shaw is a throwback to something earlier in musical life, especially when compared with young whizzes like Edo De Waart and Schwarz. He is clearly a musician who thinks that he is there to make a statement, to suggest an idea, while the younger breed give the impression of efficient businessmen who can read through any score and get by any difficulty, on their way to the airport. It's difficult to accept the second sort of musicianship at all, since the very notion of a two-month "festival" filled with dozens of pieces by (as the program has it) M, B and H (Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn), in no particular order, calls for some overall purpose and pattern to emerge from the fuss. But no: it's concert after concert, a routine for which no great music was ever written. □

FILMS.

TERRENCE RAFFERTY

The Color of Money

The first voice we hear in *The Color of Money* isn't an actor's but the director's. Over a montage of images from the mysterious, self-contained world of pool—gleaming cues, blue chalk, green felt, a white ball rolling slowly across the table and colored balls dropping into pockets—Martin Scorsese reads a short explanation of what the games we're going to watch are all about:

> Nine-ball is rotation pool. The balls are pocketed in numbered order. The only ball that *means* anything, that *wins* it, is the nine. A player can shoot eight trick shots in a row, blow the nine and lose. On the other hand, a player can get the nine on the *break* if the balls spread right. Which is all to say, that *luck* plays a part in nine-ball. But for some players, luck *itself* is a *skill* . . . or an art.

This game, Scorsese wants us to know, isn't the same one that Paul Newman, as Fast Eddie Felson, played against Jackie Gleason's Minnesota Fats in the 1961 Robert Rossen film *The Hustler*: then, the game was straight pool, in which the players called their shots and luck had nothing to do with it. "Straight pool's *pool*," says the older Fast Eddie in *The Color of Money*. "A guy had to be a surgeon to get over. It was all finesse. Now everything's nine-ball because it's fast." Like a pro, Eddie tries to adapt to this flashier, less personally rewarding way of playing the game. And maybe, by reading himself that little introductory voice-over on nine-ball, Scorsese is telling us that he's adapting, too, to a kind of moviemaking that doesn't allow him to call all his own shots anymore. *The Color of Money* is fast and absorbing and often thrillingly well made, but there's something impure about it: it's a streamlined, best-sellerish replay of Scorsese's work in the 1970s, from *Mean Streets* through *Raging Bull*. He's making all the old moves, investing just enough conviction in them to get over, and working that way, he's bound to run out of luck. In *The Color of Money*, Fast Marty dazzles us over and over again—then leaves the nine ball on the table.

Scorsese and his screenwriter, Richard Price, set everything up beautifully, but they can't win, because there's an irresolvable problem built into the story. (They bear full responsibility, since almost nothing of the late Walter Tevis's quiet, reflective novel survives in their adaptation.) At the end of *The Hustler*, cocky, talented Fast Eddie finally defeated his nemesis, Minnesota Fats, and walked away from big-time pool forever rather than pay off the oily, satanic gambler played by George C. Scott. When we first see Eddie in *The Color of Money*, twenty-five years later, he doesn't look as if he has any regrets. He's almost shockingly dapper, having made a small fortune selling liquor and providing financial backing for young pool hustlers. He has, in fact, taken on the identity of the Scott character in the earlier film: a stakehorse, jaded and prosperous. When he spots a brilliant but not very worldly young player named Vincent (Tom Cruise)—who loves pool so much he wants to keep playing even after his opponent runs out of money—Eddie smells a good thing and takes Vincent, along with his tough-cookie girlfriend Carmen (Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio) out on the road. The rhetoric of the movie is that Vincent reminds the older man of himself in his hotshot days, and that while he's educating his protégé in a variety of scams, all the corrupt and lucrative tricks of the pool-hustling trade, Eddie is slowly rediscovering his own love of the game. What this scenario ignores is Eddie's relationship to an art whose rules have changed. Price and Scorsese present their hero's return to competitive pool as a triumph of Eddie's true nature over a cynical and self-protective obsession with money. To do that, they have to keep their distance from Eddie's feelings—what it means to him to devote his talents and ego to *nine-ball*, a debased form of the subtle and elegant art he practiced in his games with Fats.

Eddie's disparaging comments about nine-ball ("This ain't pool . . . This is like handball . . . It's like cribbage or something . . . What the hell, checkers sells more than chess I guess") come before he's really started playing again, at a point at which they could be interpreted as no more than envious digs at Vincent's generation of hustlers. It's just one-upmanship, which is all *The Color of Money* turns out to be about, anyway. Scorsese and Price know this turf almost too well: *Mean Streets*, *Raging Bull* and Price's novels *The Wanderers*, *Ladies' Man* and *The Breaks*, are among the classics of street smarts, filled with the intricate strategies of barroom competition, the fine points of macho codes. Price's dialogue is so pungent and Scorsese's direction, with its trademark combination of languorous, caressing camera moves (the cinematographer is Michael Ballhaus) and edgily precise cutting, is so atmospheric that the movie can ride on sheer savvy for a good stretch. For the first two-thirds of the film, we're given a pretty exciting tour of the pool subculture, in a series of set pieces that provide both quick lessons in hustling technique and flashes of insight into the mixed motives and desires of the players. It's very knowing about pride and fear, resentment and humiliation, ambition and greed—all the gut elements of male competitiveness, the stuff that's churning beneath the surface when the balls are on the table.

Fascinating as all of this is, the movie's command of hustling lore and male psychology seems finally a bit smug and show-offy, its cynicism too glib. After a wonderful scene in which Eddie, his guard down because he's so desperate to prove he can match his pupil's skills, allows himself to be hustled by a chubby, sweet-faced black kid in jeans, the picture goes dead. At the very point where we need to see the characters deepen and develop, Scorsese and

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Price freeze them in place, and the final scenes, at an Atlantic City nine-ball tournament where both Eddie and Vincent are entered, are an elaborate but mechanical working out of the petty tensions that have built up. The climax of *The Color of Money* is just a pissing contest: as Eddie and Vincent stalk each other, Scorsese's camera circling them both, we realize there's nothing much at stake here except who's got the bigger stick, and it's tough to care. Maybe it's to the filmmakers' credit that they don't actually answer the question, but it's disheartening to think that it's the only one they know how to ask.

Richard Price, for all his gifts, may not know more than this: his last novel, *The Breaks*, had structural problems nearly identical to *The Color of Money*'s. And Tom Cruise, whose charmless manchild showboating is just barely more palatable here than it was in the appalling *Top Gun*, surely doesn't. Price's writing, like Vincent's pool shooting, is wizardly but thin, all samurai flourishes and nervy chatter. Newman knows more: his performance, an old-pro turn that effortlessly tops his earlier work in *The Hustler*, gives the movie its only emotional weight. He lets his aging face (decorated with a sharpie's mustache) do most of his work for him, and his trim body (pricily dressed) does the rest. His brisk, confident movements—the way he enters a poolroom, sizing up the talent in a couple of discreet glances, the way he turns around on a barstool, slowly, as if taking only the most casual notice of the action on the green tables behind him—tell us everything about how Eddie Felson has protected himself from his 25-year-old disappointment, and the flickering alternation of cunning and boyish vulnerability in his eyes tells us why.

Throughout, the camera lingers on Newman's features, documentary-style, as if Scorsese recognized something there, a quality he can't quite locate anywhere else in the material of this movie. What Newman seems to have—even when he's just counting his money—is an urgent, vital drive, not just to prove himself, but to *justify* himself. He has, that is, the kind of intensity that charged every frame of *Mean Streets* and *Taxi Driver* and *The Last Waltz* and, for all their flaws, *New York, New York* and *Raging Bull*, too. At his best, Scorsese still has the emotional transparency, the unembarrassed need to express himself, that he once had—but he's fighting it back. In the wake of his own disappointments—the box-office failure of *The King of Comedy* and the inability to get funding for his pet project, *The Last Temptation of Christ*—Scorsese has been trying hard to adjust to a filmmaking climate that's no longer conducive to his very personal approach. He's trying to be a pro, to prove himself with prodigious, empty displays of technique like last year's *After Hours*, with good-soldier assignments like an episode of *Amazing Stories* (which *was* the best half-hour of that show's first season), and now with this big, expensive commercial picture. His relative detachment from his recent material has certainly loosened up his style, which was becoming tense and oppressive in *The King of Comedy*, but *The Color of Money* suggests that Scorsese might be outsmarting himself: he seems to have nearly convinced himself that craft and flash, all his various kinds of smarts, are enough, that just being able to play the game makes an artist a "winner." In a way, it's a relief that he doesn't quite bring this movie off. This shouldn't be his game: it's like cribbage, or something. □

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R	■	V	■	I	■	N	■	U	■	A	■	U	■	A
E	L	A	P	S	E	D	■	B	L	U	R	R	E	D
D	■	D	■	A	■	E	■	T	■	N	■	F	■	E
C	H	E	A	P	F	A	R	E	■	T	W	A	I	N
O	■	■	■	P	■	N	■	N	■	I	■	C	■	■
A	R	C	H	E	R	■	A	D	E	N	O	I	D	S
T	■	H	■	A	■	O	■	S	■	G	■	N	■	U
S	W	E	A	R	I	N	G	■	A	R	A	G	O	N
■	■	R	■	I	■	C	■	S	■	E	■	■	■	S
B	R	U	I	N	■	O	U	T	O	F	S	T	E	P
A	■	B	■	G	■	U	■	R	■	R	■	A	■	O
T	H	I	N	A	I	R	■	E	P	A	U	L	E	T
S	■	N	■	C	■	S	■	A	■	I	■	O	■	S
■	F	I	F	T	E	E	N	M	E	N	O	N	A	■

Crossword Puzzle No. 2122

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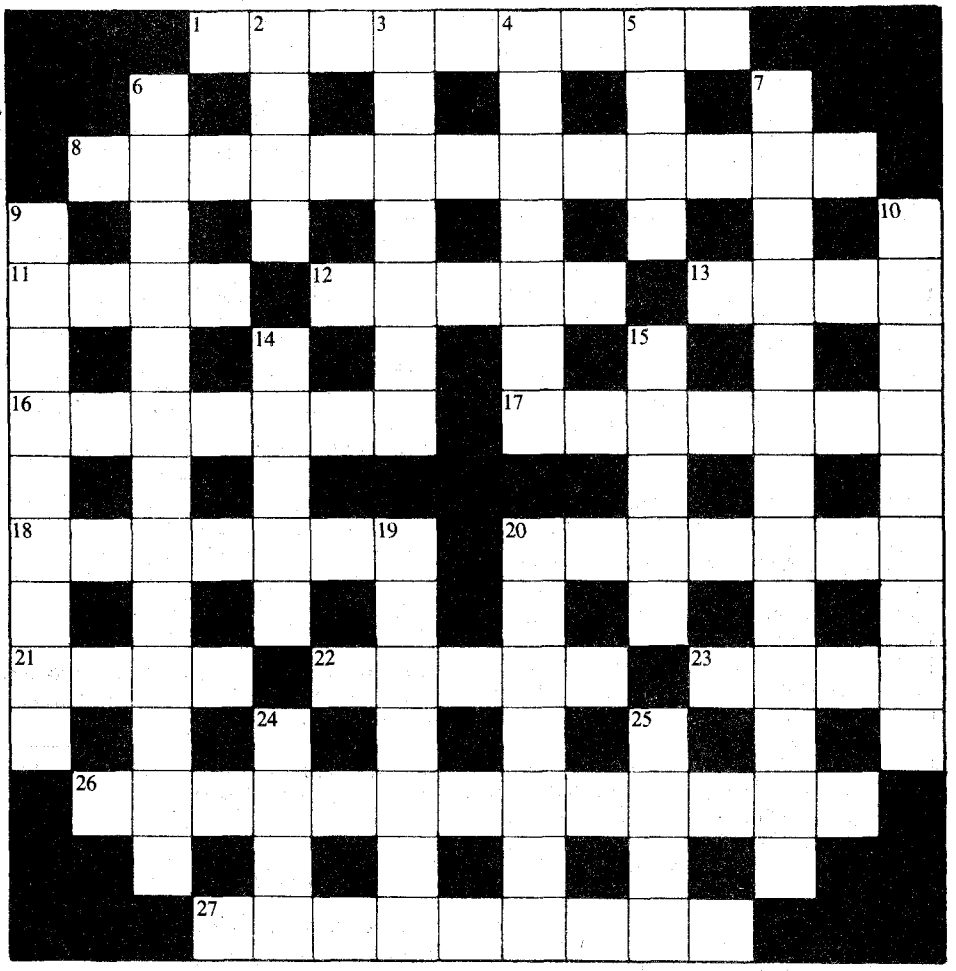

ACROSS

1 Coming back, Little Diana was late about it and ruined everything. (4,5)
8 Do they involve putting up a good front in the United Nations—or in Iowa? (7,6)
11, 12 and 13 Opening an account with this? (In a coupon, meet with trouble!) (4,4,1,4)
16 Does it imply Mussolini was broke? (Lost weight, too!) (7)
17 Old in Denmark, new in the Pacific, a lot of enthusiasm and this! (7)
18 What to do to paper with German let in again? (7)
20 What the obstetrician might do but probably not the grocer. (7)
21 The Napoleonic one was not necessarily meant to convey secret information. (4)
22 Spoiled by more than one chef. (5)
23 How to proceed with a troublemaker for the workers? (4)
26 Perhaps a dog lets the singer loose! (7,6)
27 Pal, that's the way of the sailor, considering such steps! (9)

DOWN

2 Tuna salad, relatively speaking? (4)
3 What the icicle might have done because the pipe is broken, and Dr. D. is around. (7)
4 Did he write a few notes whenever able, possibly—especially when the subject of self-contemplation is raised? (7)
5 Trip to a place in Chaldea? (4)
6 Raided part of the stairway—but one doesn't expect the flight to end so abruptly. (6,7)
7 A shy one from the continent which is reputedly dark? (7,6)
9 What you exhibit if you have poise, balance and beauty of motion, as Alice might have said to the Duchess. (4,5)
10 Drivers who are last might end up first. (As a slang expression, it might be very high.) (4,5)
14 Is there a point to a corny fad's description? That's what the little rascal implies! (5)
15 Little Sarah, as one might say, is to make an excursion. (5)
19 Eventually appears as the retroussé type. (5,2)
20 Do misplaced notes show what the adoring one does? (5,2)
24 Get her with this without exception! (She might be such a singer!) (4)
25 This man was once sat on—but still made Emperor. (4)

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